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THE CHANGING PARTY SYSTEM IN MEXICO (1970-1988)

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Ph. D. in Sociology
The University of Edinburgh
2020

Lay Summary of Thesis

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

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Title of thesis:	The Changing Party System in Mexico (1970-1988)		

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A party system is a relationship between political parties defined by electoral competition. In Mexico, one party won the elections and ruled the country for seventy years (1929-2000). This party's name changed, but it represented the same political group, which emerged after the Mexican Revolution of 1910, to finally be known as the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI), which holds until the present day. Although it was not the only political party, the opposition did not have the chance to win elections because the rules and practices of the political system favoured the party of the revolution. However, during the late 1970s and 1980s, those other parties began to win elections. This thesis explains why and how that happened and assumes this change resulted from social and economic transformations and the opposition's development as a political force. In terms of the economic change, during that same period, Mexico's economy started its integration into the global markets, which divided the national politicians between those who favoured that integration and those who championed a closed economy. This division enabled the opposition's development because it allowed them to create a political alternative to the PRI and mobilize the citizens to vote for them. The opposition's strengthening was also a consequence of a series of reforms that aimed to adapt the political system to the social changes that affected Mexico between the 1940s and the 1960s, like the country's population growth. Those reforms opened up the political system for the opposition, which gave them more opportunities to challenge the PRI and attract more supporters, as it happened with the right-wing National Action Party (PAN). Those reforms also enabled the formation of a left-wing alternative through the coalition of various left-wing parties, which eventually resulted in the creation of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in 1988. The PAN's strengthening and the PRD's emergence meant the end of the PRI's undisputable electoral triumphs and led to a new relationship between the political parties characterized by more even electoral competition.
The Mexican case illustrates the relevance of the political parties in providing a political expression to the differences that divide society because they translate those divisions into actions that affect society's organization and its relationship with the state through laws, decrees, and other public actions. In a few words, this thesis analyses how significant economic and social changes can cause big political transformations.

Abstract of Thesis

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Insert the abstract text here - the space will expand as you type.

This research analyses how profound economic and social transformations enable political change. It argues that those transformations lead to the renegotiation of the relationship between the state and civil society. Also, it claims that the political parties are key actors in that process because they politicize those transformations through the articulation of social cleavages, which define the political space. In concrete, this research explains how the Mexican party system changed from a hegemonic to a multiparty system between 1970 to 1988. Those changes are explained by the rupture of the political cohesion that mediated the relations of the state and civil society and the development of the opposition parties as entities capable of contesting the hegemonic party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The fracturing of political cohesion resulted from the lack of consensus around the 'economy's management and the opposition against the Mexican 'state's authoritarian practices. The disagreement around the economy led to the articulation of a new social cleavage that divided the political space between neoliberals and nationalists, which enabled the flourishing of political pluralism and, consequently, the reconfiguration of the relationship between the state and civil society. The neoliberal stance was embraced by the National Action Party (PAN) and a faction of the PRI, whereas the nationalist position was championed by various left-wing parties and the Democratic current, a group within the PRI. The emergence of that cleavage gave the opposition the possibility to develop an alternative political project to the PRI, which allowed them to attract and mobilize supporters. However, as mentioned before, that was not the only element that permitted the transformation of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system. Another essential component was the institutional changes fostered by the demographic growth, which enabled the opposition's development as a political force. The data for this investigation were collected in diverse documentary sources, including official publications such as the *Debates Chronicle of the Chamber of Deputies*, and publications such as *La Nacion*, *Punto Critico*, *Proceso*, and *El Nacional*.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, professors Jonathan Hearn and James Kennedy, for their guidance and support during this process. Although the responsibility of the content of this thesis rests upon my shoulders, it would definitely would not have been the same without their comments, corrections, and recommendations. Thanks for pushing me to think outside my box.

Also, I would like to thank the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia (CONACYT) for funding this research. Without their sponsorship, it would not have been possible.

Thanks to my family, particularly to my mom, Carmen, my dad, Marco, and my brother, Marco. Thanks to all my aunts for being there for me. Thanks to my cousin Luci for welcoming me to her house in Luxemburgo during my school breaks. Thanks to all of you for cheering me up and for your unconditional love.

Thanks to all my friends in Mexico for staying connected despite the distance. Thanks to all the fantastic people I had the pleasure to meet in Edinburgh, who made this a great life experience, and that now I can call my friends.

Contents

Introduction

This thesis is about political change. In concrete terms, it analyses the changes in the Mexican party system, which went from being a hegemonic party system to one with multiple political parties between 1970 and 1988. I argue that this transformation was enabled by the transition from a regulated to a market economy. That economic change led to the fracture of the political cohesion that mediated the relations between the state and civil society and enabled the articulation of a social cleavage defined by the statist and the anti-statist factions. In general terms, the statist faction advocated for the state's economic regulation, whereas the anti-statist faction promoted the market's liberalization and its internationalization. Also, I argue that the development of the opposition parties as political forces was crucial in that transformation because it allowed them to articulate that social cleavage and mobilize their constituencies to challenge the hegemony of the Institutional Revolutionary Party.

The research about political change in Mexico during the 1970s and the 1980s is related to the democratic transition. Usually, the starting point of that process is placed in 1977, when the government of Jose Lopez Portillo published an electoral law that opened up the political system to opposition parties that, until then had been marginalized from it. However, as was indicated in the previous paragraph, this research suggests a different approach to that process of political change, and focuses on the correlation between the economic model and the party system. It aims to explain why the transition from a regulated economy to a market economy meant the end of the PRI's hegemony, and how the political parties enabled the implementation of neoliberalism in Mexico. Mexico's democratization and the electoral reforms that made it possible are present in this thesis, but they are not its focus. Instead of showing how those electoral changes opened up the political system for the opposition, I am showing how they enabled their development as political forces, which allowed the articulation of the statist/anti-statitst cleavage and the implementation of neoliberalism in the country.

I became interested in analysing the changes in Mexico's political system from the perspective of the party-system after reading some of the work of Alberto Azis Nazif (2003), and Lorenzo Meyer (2004). Particularly, I remember being sat down in the Biblioteca Vasconcelos reading Meyer's book, in which he explained that, after 1988, the elections went from being a plebiscite that validated through popular vote

the decisions previously taken by the PRI and the government, to processes in which the political parties actually competed for power in the polls. This was a sort of eureka moment for me, because it reasserted my intuition of a deep transformation that went beyond the electoral changes and the inclusion of the opposition in the political system. Although, in that moment I could not define exactly what that transformation consisted of. However, that evidence was sufficient for me to begin my research quest explaining the transformation of the Mexican party system between 1970 and 1988.

The reason I decided to place the starting point of my research in 1970 is because Luis Echeverría's presidential term was a breaking point in Mexico's political system. To begin with, during his administration the erosion of the economic model that had prevailed in the country since the early 1950s, and that had successfully supported Mexico's economic growth, began. Additionally, during this period there was a change within the members of the public administration, the so called technocrats slowly started to take control of key positions in the public administration, overpowering the traditional politicians, this transformation will be addressed in more detail further on in the thesis. Another relevant change that took place during the Echeverría administration was a break between the political elite and some members of the economic elite after the conflict that arose between the President and the business sector, which opposed the new economic model that Echeverría tried to implement. Finally, I consider that the electoral reforms implemented during this administration have more relevance than it is often attributed to them. Although those reforms did not bring spectacular changes or opened up the political system, they did encourage some opposition parties to organize to fight for the reformation of the system, as I explain in the third chapter.

I established 1988 as the end date of my thesis based on Meyer (2004) and his statement of the quality change of the elections. The existence of electoral competition marked the transformation from a hegemonic party system to a multiparty system. Additionally, the year of 1988 also marked the consolidation of the technocrats and their neoliberal project in power. As I will explain in chapter five, the rift that took place in the PRI during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) neutralized the opposition to the technocrat's neoliberal project within the party and the public administration, which enabled the severance to deepen.

In general terms, a party system is the system of interactions resulting from the inter-party competition (Sartori, 2005 39). As can be observed, competition is an

essential element in the party system, together with the number of parties, it is crucial to define the type of party systems. In a hegemonic party system, there can be many different parties. However, in those types of systems, one party counts more than the others. The other parties' existence is tolerated, but they cannot compete in antagonistic and equal terms with the party that counts the most (Sartori, 2005 112). In contrast, in a multiparty system, all the parties have, theoretically, the same chances to win an election; that is to say, there is electoral competition.

In Mexico, the hegemonic party system began to develop in 1929 with the creation of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party, PNR) and consolidated in the 1950s after the transformation of the *Partido de la Revoución Mexicana* (Mexican Party of the Revolution, PRM) into the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI). That consolidation coincided with the beginning of a stage of unprecedented economic growth, supported by an economic model known as the Stabilizing Development. Between the early 1950s and the late 1960s, the Mexican economy lived a time of bonanza and political stability. However, in the late 1960s, the economic model began to show signs of exhaustion, and the 1968 student's mobilization shook that political stability.

As I will explain later in the thesis, hegemonic parties, besides being channels of communication between state and society, are also stabilizing forces that define an epoch through the implementation of a social, economic, and political project in a period of structural rearrangements, generally in the aftermath of a regime's overthrow. T.J. Pempel refers to it as a historical project, which he defines as "[…] a series of interrelated and mutually supportive policies that give shape to the national political agenda" (Pempel, 1990: 4)

In the case of Mexico, that historical project was defined by the country's modernization through its industrialization. The control of political plurality was essential for carrying out that project because it prevented the emergence of alternative projects, and it enabled its continuity. However, the political and economic crisis of the late 1960s questioned that historical program, and the process of transforming the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system began.

In response to the crisis, president Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) tried to implement a series of political and economic reforms that transformed the relationship between the Mexican state and civil society. In political terms, his administration carried out some electoral modifications in 1971 and 1973, through which he aimed to

channel the political discontent after the 1968 student's movement. Instead of accomplishing that objective, the reforms carried out during this administration motivated political organizations marginalized from the system, like the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), to seek its integration.

The economic reform aimed to solve the crisis by implementing a new economic model known as Shared Development. In contrast with the Stabilizing Development model, Shared Development focused on distributing wealth, not in generating it. Additionally, this model aimed to increase the state's intervention in the economy, which was not welcomed by the national business sector. The conflict between the business sector and the administration of Luis Echeverría reflected a more significant structural difference, which eventually enabled the transformation of the multiparty system: the opposition to the state's intervention in the economy.

That opposition is related to the transition from a protected economy to a market economy. In this kind of profound structural changes, the heterogeneity of social life tends to be generated through "new demands, sectors, and identities […]" (De Leon et al., 2015: 30), which enables the creation of new social cleavages. The political parties articulate those social cleavages through the politicization of that heterogeneity, which allows them to "[...] to build powerful blocs of supporters in whose name they attempt to remake states and societies" (De Leon et al., 2015: 2).

In the Mexican case, the cleavage that the political parties articulated in response to the transition from a protected to a market economy was the anti-statist and statist cleavage. The first faction was articulated by the National Action Party and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). At first sight, the coincidence between both parties might come across as strange, given that the PAN opposed the PRI, and its predecessor, the PRM, from its creation in 1938.

However, as I will explain in the first chapter, the root of that articulation varied according to the party. In the case of the PAN, the anti-statist tendency originated in its general opposition to state intervention. That rejection was not limited to the economy, since it also included other aspects like education and the state's involvement in demographic planning through birth control campaigns. Regarding the PRI, the anti-statist tendency articulation originated from a faction within the party: the technocrats. This group advocated for the economy's efficiency and the liberalization and internationalization of the national economy. To distinguish one from the other, I

will refer to the PAN's tendency as the conservative anti-statist strand and the PRI's anti-statist strand will be the liberal one.

It is relevant to mention that the PAN had to develop its strength as an opposition party in order to articulate the conservative anti-statist strand. This process resulted from the combination of diverse elements, mainly, the internal changes that allowed it to welcome and ally with a disaffected faction of the business sector, the mobilization of the middle class through an antiauthoritarian discourse, and their electoral triumphs at a local level and their capacity to secure them.

The articulation of the statist pole is related to the development of the left-wing parties and their unification process. Their development as opposition began in 1977 with the electoral reform that allowed them to obtain their registration as national political parties, like the Mexican Communist Party. The first unifying effort of the left after the reform was the Left Wing Coalition, a parliamentary group integrated by the PCM and other left-wing organizations active in the Chamber of Deputies between 1979 to 1982. The Left Wing Coalition experience paved the way for creating the Socialist Unified Mexican Party (PSUM), which was the first attempt to institutionalize the left-wing parties' alliance. Nonetheless, the PSUM did not include all the existing left-wing parties, like the Mexican Worker's Party (PMT), which got its registration as a political party for contending in the mid-term 1985 elections. Just as it happened with the Left Wing Coalition, the legislative activity enabled the unity of the left-wing parties, which created the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS) in 1987, contending with a single candidate in the 1988 presidential elections.

The unifying efforts of the left did not strengthen it as an opposition force capable of contesting the PRI. The explanation of that outcome transcends the objectives of this thesis. However, it is possible to attribute the weakness of the left's unifying efforts to its pragmatic character, which means that they did not achieve an organic integration that would have allowed them to work as a solid block. Instead, the constant internal divisions undermined its capacity to become a political force capable of defying the PRI. Connected to that lack of internal unity, the left-wing parties seemed to have been incapable of mobilizing the masses. But, as I mentioned, explaining that exceeds the objectives of my research.

The left became a real contender as a consequence of a split in the PRI, which took place in 1987 after Carlos Salinas was nominated as the presidential candidate for the 1988 elections. The technocrats took control of the party and the government

in 1982 when Miguel de la Madrid became Mexico's president. During his administration, there was a neoliberal spin in policy and within the PRI, which was unwelcome by some of its members. The disaffected *priistas* gathered together in the Democratic Current (CD) under the leadership of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo. The CD's initial intention was to democratize the presidential candidate's selection because they wanted to stop Miguel de la Madrid from selecting someone that would continue his policy. However, their attempts were unsuccessful, and some of its members decided to leave the party to nominate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

The organization that supported Cárdenas' candidacy was the National Democratic Front (FND), which, in the beginning, did not include the PMS. After Cárdenas's success, the PMS decided to join the FDN and decline in his favor. Following the elections, most of the parties and organizations that integrated the FDN formed the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) to institutionalize the unity achieved during the campaign. The PRD's birth meant the emergence of a third electoral force capable of challenging the PRI in the polls, which in turn enabled the transformation of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system.

Thesis Overview

The thesis is divided in five chapters. I present the literature review, the theoretical framework, the research methods, and data collection in the first one. The literature about the party system in Mexico frames my research. In general terms, that literature tends to focus on the electoral reforms, the elite consensus or division, and the redistribution of resources as the main factors that explain the system's changes. It is also focused on the period between 1977 and the year 2000 and tends to neglect the parties' internal transformations. Lastly, in the literature about the Mexican party system, there is a conceptual inconsistency in terms of the classification of the PRI and the party system.

The theoretical framework that shapes this research is based on the literature about the party systems, particularly Maurice Duverger and Giovanni Sartori. However, I also include other authors that have specifically addressed the hegemonic party system or similar party systems like the dominant party system. This theoretical framework is also supported by Victor Pérez Díaz's conceptual approach to the relationship between the state and civil society. According to him, that relationship is organized by two dimensions: the extension of the state area (liberal dimension) and

the weight of citizen participation in the decisions of the state area (democratic dimension), which define the extension of the state area and the relevance of the citizen's participation (Pérez, 1987: 42). Finally, De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2015) provided the theoretical framework to explain the political parties' articulation of the social cleavages.

I carried out the research using a theoretically driven historical analysis, which allowed me to reconstruct the hegemonic party system's transformation into a multiparty system. I collected data in documents, newspapers, magazines, official publications, and other published sources. I also gathered information from memoirs, biographies, and published interviews with key actors, such as ex-presidents like Luis Echeverría, Lopez Portillo, and Miguel de la Madrid.

In the second chapter, I explain the development of the hegemonic party system. In that chapter, I argue that the hegemonic party system was instrumental in implementing the historical project that shaped the national political agenda in the aftermath of the Mexican revolution. The hegemonic party system originated in 1929 with the foundation of the National Revolutionary Party and consolidated in the early 1950s after the creation of the PRI and the publication of the 1946 electoral law. That electoral law was crucial for controlling the electoral competition because it created the institutional mechanisms to secure the PRI's electoral victories and the continuity in implementing the historical project.

In the third chapter, I address the political and economic crisis that affected Mexico in the late 1960s, the response of the administration of Luis Echeverría to it, and the reactions to those attempts. In this chapter, I argue that the erosion of the hegemonic party system began due to Echeverría's response, which, particularly in economic terms, changed the terms that regulated the relationship between the state and civil society, thus creating discontent among the business sector. At the core of the conflict between Echeverría and the business sector was the state's intervention in the economy, which some of the businessmen considered the origin of the economic crisis.

Additionally, in that chapter, I address the political reform carried out during that administration. The political reform of 1971 consisted of modifications to the electoral law and the constitution, which aimed to adapt it to the country's demographic conditions by lowering the voting age and the age required to become senator or deputy. In 1973, his administration published the 1973 Federal Electoral Law, which

substituted the 1946 electoral legislation. Among other things, the legislation granted new rights to the parties, such as an active representation of all registered political parties in the Federal, Local and District Electoral Comission, and access to national radio and television transmissions. Also, this law lowered the requirements to acquire registration as a political party, for example, the number of members required went from 75,000 to 65,000. Despite this new legislation, during his administration, no new political party was registered. However, this new legislation motivated marginalized political groups, like the Mexican Communist Party, to seek its registration.

In the fourth chapter, I address the transformations brought by the electoral reform of 1977 and the opposition parties' development. Its central argument is that the political and economic crisis pushed electoral reforms that enabled the system's political forces to realign. That electoral reform permitted the temporary registration of political parties marginalized from the system until then. This was the case of the Mexican Communist Party and the Mexican Democratic Party (PDM). Besides addressing the political reform of 1977, I also talk about the legislative body of 1979, in which the recently registered parties participated for the first time. As I mentioned before, in the left-wing parties' case, legislative activity was crucial for their unification. Finally, in this chapter, I address how the PAN strengthened after its internal conflict before the 1977 elections, which resulted in the party not having a presidential candidate, something that had not happened since its foundation in 1938. The outcome of the PAN's internal conflict was the internal displacement of a party faction that opposed establishing pragmatic alliances with the business community and welcoming them into the party's ranks, since, according to them, it undermined their principles. As I explain in the fifth chapter, the business sector's association was crucial to advance the PAN's position.

In the last chapter, I explain the rise of the multiparty system. I contend that during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), the hegemonic party system was transformed into a multiparty system because of the following elements: the consolidation of the PAN as an electoral force, the arrival of the neoliberal faction to the PRI's leadership and the split of the Democratic Current, as well as the unification of the socialist and nationalist independent left in the PSUM first, and in FDN, after Cárdenas' split from the PRI. Also, I explain the articulation of the anti-statist cleavage by the PAN and the PRI, the articulation of the statist pole of the cleavage by the left-wing parties.

As it can be observed, from the second chapter onwards the thesis is organized chronologically. It starts by explaining the characteristics of the hegemonic party, which is essential for comprehending its transformation, and then I explain key events that permitted said transformation during the administrations of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976), Jose Lopez Portillo (1976-1982), and Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988).

To summarize, this research analyses a process of political change enabled by complex economic and social transformations, like the transition from a protected economy to a market economy. I argue that those transformations modified the relationship between the Mexican state and the civil society by opening the door to political plurality. Also, I claim that the political parties were key actors in that process because they politicize those transformations by articulating a social cleavage defined by the dispute around Mexico's economic management. The articulation of that cleavage, plus the development of the opposition parties as political forces, eventually led to the modification of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system.

Chapter 1. The Thesis Backbone. Context, Theory, and Method.

Four sections integrate this chapter. The first one is the literature review in which I frame my thesis based on texts about the party system in Mexico from the 1970s onwards. In the second section, I develop the thesis theoretical framework, in which I address the concepts of the hegemonic party system and the hegemonic party. Based on Victor Pérez Díaz (1987) and De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2015), I explain how structural changes transform the relationship between state and civil society and how the political parties articulate those changes into social cleavages. In the following section, I explain that the case study and how the different elements of the theoretical framework work together in explaining the transformation of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system. Finally, in the last section, I explain how the thesis was done, that is to say, what research method I used and how and where I collected my data.

Literature Review

The present research deals with political change. It explores the transformations in Mexico's political system between 1970-1988, focusing on the party system, which went from a hegemonic party system to a multiparty system. Before my research, other works have dealt with the changes in the party system. The subject began to draw attention after the 2000 presidential elections, in which Vicente Fox, the PAN candidate, defeated Francisco Labastida Ochoa from the PRI. In general, these works explain why the PRI lost the elections, its survival, and adaptation after its defeat (Díaz & Magaloni, 2001; Green, 2007; Langston, 2017).

However, there are some exceptions to this trend. For example, in 1991, Jose Antonio Crespo published a paper in which he states that the electoral reform of 1977, together with the economic crisis of 1982, enabled the rearrangement of the party system. A consequence of that reorganization was the emergence of two pairs of cleavages: Democracy-Authoritarianism and Liberalism-Statism, from which the second one prevailed, making room for a political alliance between the PAN and the PRI for the implementation of a free market economy (Crespo, 1991).

Another example is "Houses Divided: Parties and Political Reform in Mexico" by Craig & Cornelius (1995), which was published in a volume edited by Mainwaring

& Scully, in which different scholars analyzed Latin American party systems and their capacity to create stable democratic institutions. In Mexico's case, Craig and Cornelious acknowledge significant changes in the party system during the 1980s and early 1990s, like the decline of votes for the PRI and the development of the opposition parties. They considered that those transformations were a consequence of demographic changes, electoral reforms, and the elite consensus "[…] favoring deeper political reform […]" which was driven by the realization that "[…] the long-term success of economic liberalization [depended] on constructing a broader political alliance to underpin the new economic model" (Craig & Cornelious, 1995: 290). However, they also considered that there was still room for improvement in the consolidation of the country's democratic institutions, like limiting the presidential powers, which were viewed by many observers as "[…] the core of Mexican authoritarianism and the fundamental obstacle to genuine democratization" (Craig & Cornelious, 1995: 289).

After the 2000 election, the scholars that addressed this subject still considered the electoral reforms and the role of the political elite in the transformation of the party system as crucial elements that explained those changes. However, they tended to neglect structural factors, and they turned their attention to understanding the PRI's defeat and its survival after it. On the one hand, the PRI's downfall is explained by the elite's division (Magaloni, 2006) and its loss of capacity to raise the cost of political participation (Green, 2007) and of its loss of resource advantage (Ortega, 2017). On the other, the party's survival is considered the result of institutional features, like fiscal decentralization (Estevez, Díaz-Cayeros& Magaloni, 2008; Langston, 2017) and of electoral rules that favoured the PRI (Díaz-Cayeros& Magaloni, 2001). Also, this body of literature highlights that, once the PRI lost the presidency, the party's stronghold of power was displaced to the local governments, which diminished the dominion of its central authority and raised the importance of governors as political actors (Pacheco: 2000, Estevez, Díaz-Cayeros & Magaloni, 2008; Cantu & Desposato, 2012; Langston, 2017).

As I mentioned before, the dynamic among parties, while important to my analysis, is not the main point of interest in that body of literature. However, there have been scholars that have addressed the interaction between parties and between parties and institutions. For example, Eisenstad (2003) focuses his attention on the development of the electoral institutions as guarantors of the elections. He argues that,

in order for those institutional arrangements to work, the actors (the political parties) had to acknowledge them as channels of conflict resolution, which did not happen automatically. Another example is Ortega (2017), who focuses on the presidential elections and aims to explain Mexico's process of liberalization and democratization between 1970 to 2000. Based on Charles Tilly (1993, 1995) and LaPalombara and Anderson (1992), Ortega argues that the political parties were key actors in that process due to their capacity to create "[…] democratic identities, which sustained the transformation of the authoritarian regime into a democratic one" through the mobilization of ideological resources (Ortega, 2017).

In the literature written before the 2000 elections, the structural factors, such as economic liberalization or demographic changes, played a relevant role in explaining the transformation of the party system. In contrast, the literature produced after the PRI's overthrow tends to explain those transformations through the new institutional arrangements, the PRI's lack of access to economic and political resources, and the response of the political elite to those changes. Another interesting difference between them is the focus on the PRI in the post-2000 literature, whereas the pre-2000 one tends to revolve around the dynamic between parties and institutions, Eisenstad (2003) and Ortega (2017) being the exceptions. However, the literature that analyzes the system as a whole neglects the parties' internal changes and how that affected the relationship between parties, which is essential for understanding the system's transformation; the parties should not be considered as constant entities that do not change over time. As I will show in this research, understanding their internal reforms is essential to comprehending the system's transformation.

Another common characteristic is that, based on the dates of publication of electoral reforms and of presidential elections, most of the authors established the time frame of their work between the late 1970s and early 2000s.[1] However, I consider that the transformation of the party system began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when structural changes, such as the implementation of a new economic model and demographic growth, started to manifest. Also, I consider that during the 1970s and 1980s, the PRI and the opposition parties articulated those transformations into social

[1] Two exceptions are Craig & and Cornelious (1995) and Ortega (2017), but their treatment of the years before 1977 is rather superficial, and they focus on the electoral changes. Also, only Craig & Cornelious address the internal changes of the parties, but they do not explain in detail how those changes were affected by the structural transformation and their impact on the relation with other parties.

cleavages that reshaped the party system, which consolidated in the late 1980s. Additionally, previously published works neglected the intermediary role of the parties and failed to explain how the political parties integrate the state and society,

Finally, in the literature, there is a conceptual inconsistency regarding the PRI, and, in consequence, about the type of party system. Some authors refer to the PRI as a dominant party (Green, 2007), others as a hegemonic party (Craig & Cornelious, 1995), and even as a one party-state (Eisenstadt, 2003). The distinction between those types of parties is subtle but relevant because it defines the type of party system. As I will explain in the next section, the main analytic difference lies in the relationship between the dominant, hegemonic, or party-state and the opposition. In the next section, I will clarify why I consider that the PRI was a hegemonic party, and, therefore, the party system was a hegemonic party system.

Summing up, previous research on the Mexican party system has considered electoral reforms, the elite's consensus or division, and the redistribution of resources as the principal factors that explain its transformation. As well, it has focused its attention on the period 1977-2000 and the PRI. Also, it has neglected the parties' internal changes and how this affected the relation between them and their capacity to articulate political cleavages. Finally, in the literature about the Mexican party system, there is an inconsistency regarding the definition of the PRI, which also affects the party system's classification.

Following Giovanni Sartori ([1976] 2005) and Craig and Cornelious (1995), I define the PRI as a hegemonic party and the party system as a hegemonic party system. Also, I argue that the changes in Mexico's party system resulted from structural changes like implementing a new economic model and demographic growth. Those transformations broke the political unity that supported the hegemonic party system and opened the door for political plurality, which the parties articulated in social cleavages. Additionally, I state that the electoral reforms not only opened up the political system they also enabled the parties' internal transformations, which allowed them to develop their capacity to articulate those social cleavages. Finally, I argue that, besides changing the terms of electoral competition, the transformation of the hegemonic party system to a multiparty system implied a renegotiation of the relationship between the state and civil society.

In the section that follows, I will present the theoretical framework, beginning with the description of the hegemonic party and the hegemonic party system. After

that, I will address the articulation of social cleavages, and, finally, I will explain how the articulation of those cleavages enabled the transformation of the party system and the renegotiation of the relationship between state and civil society.

Theoretical framework

The hegemonic party system

According to a definition provided by Giovani Sartori, a party system is the "[…] system of interactions resulting from interparty competition". This interaction is defined by the "relatedness of the parties to each other", that is to say, "how each party is a function (in the mathematical sense) of the other parties and reacts, competitively or otherwise, to the other parties" (Sartori, 2005 39). Considering that definition, Sartori developed a typology of the party systems based on the number of parties, the level of competitiveness, and the ideological continuum within the system. Although each criterion is fundamental for determining the type of party system, there is a hierarchy between them, the numerical criteria being the principal one. The number of parties influences the level of competitiveness and the breadth of the ideological continuum. Common sense would tell us that the bigger the number of parties, the more competitive a system would be, and the probability of having a polarized system would be higher. However, that is not always true, because, in a party system, not all parties count the same and, therefore, are not equally relevant.

To count the number of parties and assess their relevance, Sartori, following two rules, applies what he labels as "intelligent counting". The first rule is that a minor party can be discounted as irrelevant "[…] whenever it remains over time superfluous, in the sense that it is never needed or put to use for any feasible coalition majority" (Sartori, 2005 106). The second rule is that a party "[…] qualifies for relevance whenever its existence, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the direction of the competition" (Sartori, 2005 106), which he considers the blackmail potential of a party. According to him, that "intelligent counting" counts parties but also accounts for its strength. Based on it, plus the level of competitiveness and the ideological continuum, Sartori established seven types of party systems: one-party, hegemonic party, predominant party, two-party, moderate pluralism, extreme pluralism, and atomized pluralism.

I will not explain in detail each of the types, and I will focus on the predominant and hegemonic party systems in order to clarify the differences between them. These

types of systems tend to be grouped in the one-party system category. However, Sartori rightly distinguishes them. He states that the one-party system should not even be considered a party system because, in those, the existence of other parties is not permitted, and only one is able to monopolize power. Therefore, there is no competition or relation between parties (Sartori, 2005: 42). In the hegemonic and the predominant party systems, however, there are other parties in the system (Sartori, 2005 111), but there is one party that counts more than the rest. In the hegemonic party systems, other parties are tolerated but are not allowed to compete in antagonistic and equal terms with the party that counts the most. Conversely, in the predominant party systems, "[…] one party governs alone without being subjected to alternation, as long as it continues to win, electorally, an absolute majority" (Sartori, 2005 112).

What Sartori labels as the predominant party system, other authors (Witar, 1970; Arian & Samuels, 1974; Pempel, 1991), based on Duverger (1954), call the dominant party system. In the following, I will use the term dominant party systems to refer to that type of party system because it is more frequently used in the literature than the predominant party system. It is relevant to make this clarification not only for clarity in the use of terms. As well, Duverger and other scholars, when talking about the dominant party system, have also addressed the characteristics and function in the political system of that party that counts more than the others, which Sartori does not do.

Even though the hegemonic party and the dominant party are not the same, explaining the characteristics of the former helps us to understand the transformation of a hegemonic party system to a multiparty system, because their roles in the political system are similar and their main difference is their relation with the opposition parties. To start, in contrast with other types of parties, the function of the dominant and hegemonic parties goes beyond establishing a channel of communication between the state and society. Additionally, these parties tend to be stabilizing forces with the capacity to define an epoch through "[…] its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style, so to speak […]" (Duverger, 1954). These parties acquire the ability to achieve that objective because they embody a project of social, economic, and political articulation in a period of structural rearrangements, which usually results from the overthrow of a previous regime.

T.J. Pempel refers to that articulation project as a historical project. He defines it as a "[…] series of interrelated and mutually supportive policies that give shape to the national political agenda" (Pempel, 1991: 4). To pursue it, the dominant and hegemonic parties rule for an extended period, during which they shape institutions and staff public and semi-public bureaucracies (Arian & Barnes, 1974). In short, during their time in office, the dominant and hegemonic party systems shape "socio-economic coalitions, policymaking structures, and public policy" based on their historical project (Pempel, 1991: 14). As a consequence of this ability to create institutions and forge socio-economic coalitions, the dominant party can "[…] mobilize and rebuff segments of the population selectively in relation to the needs and absorptive capacity of the party", which allows them to control the political mobilization of civil society (Arian & Barnes, 1974).

Regarding the opposition parties, Arian and Barnes claim that they have the function of keeping the party at the center of the political spectrum, which allows it to have a broader appeal among the population (Arian & Barnes, 1974). This characteristic is particularly relevant when it holds a nationalist position, because it is able to declare that its broad representation of interests is that of the nation.

Until this point, it is possible to say that there are similarities between the dominant and the hegemonic parties. However, the literature about the dominant party system is insufficient for understanding the relation of the hegemonic party with the opposition. According to it, in the dominant party systems, the electoral competition occurs when civic and political liberties are respected, making it fair. In contrast, in the hegemonic party system, the dice are loaded in favor of the hegemonic party, making it almost impossible for the opposition to win, and for the citizens to express their discontent against the regime through the polls. Therefore, its electoral success and permanence in office is not the result of public approval expressed in the electoral competition. However, this does not mean that the hegemonic party and the regime that it represents lack social consent. I argue that its legitimacy is based on the historical project that the party embodies, which I will explain later in the text.

To better comprehend the relation between the hegemonic party and the opposition parties, I turn to Duverger's analysis of the single parties. The distinction between the single party and the single-party system blurs, and it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. However, that blurred line between both is

characteristic of this type of party system, because the single-party predominates over the system and controls it.

Duverger claims that the single-party type of parties reflects a national and social unity, which is considered threatened by political pluralism as it can lead to a distortion of the general interests, and therefore, it is against the pursuit of the public good. In the case of the hegemonic party, that general interest is contained in the historical project carried out by it, and any alternative project is not welcome as it represents a menace to its materialization. Therefore, the limitations to the opposition parties to access office is a mechanism for controlling pluralism in order to preserve the validity and cohesion of the historical project. However, unlike the single parties, in the hegemonic party system the existence of the opposition parties is necessary. On the one hand, they help to preserve the illusion of democracy. On the other, the opposition parties enable identifying the hegemonic party with the center of the political spectrum, which permits to frame its historical project as a national one.

This section has shown that the hegemonic party is a hybrid between the dominant party and the single party. The dominant and hegemonic parties share characteristics like staying in power for long periods, which allows them to carry out a historical project through which the party shapes the national political agenda and institutions thanks to a series of interrelated and mutually supported polices. Also, both parties are characterized by a broad political appeal, which gives them the capacity to enable social unity and to mobilize and rebuff segments of the population selectively in relation to the needs and absorptive capacity of the party. However, they also have differences, the principal one being its relation with the opposition. Whereas the dominant party competes in conditions of relative equality with the other parties, the hegemonic party competes in a position of advantage.

In its relation to the opposition, the hegemonic party is closer to the single parties. For both types, political plurality is a menace to the stability of the regime they represent. Therefore, the party elites consider the control of the opposition vital for the regime's survival. Nevertheless, how each type of regime deals with this situation is different. In the single-party systems, the opposition is banned, whereas, in the hegemonic systems, the opposition can exist, but in a subordinated position, and it is controlled through legal and illegal mechanisms.

However, the control of the opposition and political plurality not only depends on those mechanisms; its contention is also associated with the capacity of the political

elite to comply with the terms of the historical project. This project mediates the relations between state and society, which means that, among other things, it establishes the conditions of acceptance of the state authority by civil society. Its fulfillment not only relies on the political skills of the elite members, it is also sustained by external factors out of their control, which eventually can force a renegotiation of the terms of the agreement, which in turn can lead to the opening of the political system. In the next sections, I will explain in more detail how structural changes can push the transition from a hegemonic party system to a multiparty-system by altering the terms of the relation between state and society and enabling the articulation of social cleavages

The redefinition of the domination rules

According to Víctor Pérez Díaz, the relations between state and civil society are organized by two dimensions: the extension of the state area (liberal dimension) and the weight of citizen participation in the decisions of the state area (democratic dimension). These dimensions "[…] build a space with two variables (the extension of the state area and the relevance of the participation), and two values: it is possible to be more or less liberal, and more or less democratic" (Pérez, 1987: 42). As stated by Pérez Díaz, the relations between the state and civil society are more liberal and less democratic when the extension of the state area is wide, and the relevance of citizen participation is low. Conversely, those relations are more democratic and less liberal when the relevance of citizen participation is high, and the extension of the state area is limited (Pérez, 1987: 42).[2]

The relation between state and civil society is based on the exchange of resources (goods and services), "[…] the key resource being obedience to authority" (Pérez, 1987: 18). Following Weber, Pérez Díaz defines authority as legitimate domination, and domination as the "[…] ultimate decision-making power over decision

[2] Pérez Díaz's conceptual scheme for the analysis of the relationship between the state and civil society was developed in the frame of a liberal democratic state. For him, a regime is defined by the design of that relationship. In a totalitarian regime, the state's area of public decision is widened to the maximum, and the voice of civil society reduced to the minimum. In contrast, in a liberal democracy, the area of public decision is regulated, and the space for civil society's voice expands (Pérez, 1987: 20). However, in a liberal democratic regime the area of public decisions and the extension of civil society's voice variates. As I mentioned before, a regime would be more liberal when the state area is wide, and more democratic when it is limited and the area of civil society is wide. For him, the state and civil society are opposing actors in constant struggle for the definition of the terms of their relationship, in which the main issue in conflict is the extent of obedience to the state authority. (Pérez, 1987: 19).

areas characterized as public or state", which implies the acceptance of the monopoly of violence (Pérez, 1987: 19). The exercise of the authority by the political class over civil society requires the consent of the former, and it is subjected to rules that define the scope of the state area and the procedures of participation of civil society (Pérez, 1987, 19).

In exchange for the consent of civil society, the state, embodied by the political class, "[…] solves or helps to solve (or reduces the impact of) certain basic problems of society", such as social integration, collective identity, defense from abroad or economic growth (Pérez, 1987: 20). If the political class or the civil society perceives this exchange as unjust, unfair, or unsatisfactory, then it leads to a tendency to revise the rules of that relation. Consequently, there is a redesign of the relation between state and civil society, resulting in the expansion of the state area or the strengthening of civil society.

Until this point, the connection between Pérez Díaz's analysis of the state-civil society relationship and the transformation of the hegemonic party system might not be entirely clear. To begin with, Pérez Díaz highlights the relevance of the rules of domination in the design of the state-civil society relationship. As I mentioned before, in the case of the hegemonic party system, those rules are contained in the historical project, which, by establishing the course of the national political agenda, structures the relationship between state and civil society. Thus, any alteration in that historical project will affect the relationship between the state and civil society.

Additionally, I consider that his approach enables us to understand the impact of structural changes in the party system because it explains how they can encourage or restrict political pluralism. For example, if the redesign of the relationship leads to a strengthening of civil society participation, political pluralism will likely flourish for two main reasons. In the first place, there will be more voices that want to be heard, and that might express different points of view about the same problems. Secondly, the strengthening of the civil society increases the suppression cost of the opposition by the government (Dahl, 1971: 15), which enables the existence and participation of the opposition parties and the articulation of cleavages that organize the political space.

To better understand the impact of the changes in the relation between state and civil society in the hegemonic party system, it is relevant to recapitulate its characteristics. A hegemonic party system is a system in which many parties exist, but one counts more than the other parties, which are not allowed to participate in

antagonistic and equal terms in the electoral competition. The hegemonic party is the bearer of a historical project, which legitimizes its existence, shapes the national political agenda, and mediates the relations between state and civil society. This historical project is framed as the representation of the national interests, and any alternative to it is considered a menace to the stability of the political system. Considering that, political pluralism is viewed as a liability that has to be controlled.

Given that political pluralism is constrained in the hegemonic party systems, the terms of domination favor the scope of the state area and diminish the weight of civil society's participation. This design of the relationship between both elements is consented to because the political elite demonstrates its capacity to solve the fundamental problems of society. This characteristic is particularly valuable in contexts of a change of regime when this type of party system usually arises.

However, due to endogenous and exogenous factors, the political elite loses the capacity to solve those fundamental problems of society. Consequently, the domination starts to begin to be perceived by the civil society, or some of its groups, as unjust, unfair, and unsatisfactory. This change in the perception leads to a revision of the rules that mediate the relationship between the state and civil society. In terms of the hegemonic party system, this revision leads to the questioning of the historical project that supports it and opens the door to political pluralism and its competing projects, which the opposition parties articulate in social cleavages.

In the Mexican case, the historical project that supported the hegemonic party was rooted in the principles of the Mexican Revolution, which meant to bring social justice to the masses that had fought it. However, within time, those principles were relegated due to the objective of modernizing the country. The definition of Mexico's modernization as the primary goal of the historical project occurred at the end of the Second World War when the administration of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) implemented a model of mixed economy in tune with the world economic tendencies, which favored the control of the market (Loyola & Martínez, 2010: 26). This shift in terms of the historical project coincided with the consolidation of the hegemonic party system, as I will explain in the next chapter.

In this modernizing project, the roles of the state and the different groups of civil society were well defined. The first one became the promoter of the economy through the construction of infrastructure, the protection of the internal market, and the creation of financial organizations and parastatal companies in areas in which the private sector

could not (or would not) invest, but that were necessary for the country's economic development (Loyola & Martínez, 2010: 27). Despite this, the private sector was expected to carry out the economic development of the country, in exchange for profitable revenues (Loyola & Martínez, 2010: 52). Regarding workers and peasants, they had to contribute with their labor in exchange for meager wages and the promise that, someday, the wealth generated would be enough to be distributed among them as well.

The materialization of the modernizing project implied the control of political plurality and favored the development and consolidation of the hegemonic party system for the following reasons. In the first place, the Mexican Revolution had atomized the national power, and, in order to implement the policies needed for the modernization of the country, it was necessary to centralize it. This process entailed the gathering of the different revolutionary factions in a single organization, which eventually came to be known as the PRI. In the second place, it was instrumental in controlling the political activity of the working classes to keep them in a subordinated position. This objective was achieved through their incorporation to the party through its corporatist structure, which also provided the hegemonic party with a base of social support. Finally, the modernizing project was framed as a national project that represented the best interests of Mexico and, therefore, any group that represented another alternative was viewed as a danger that had to be neutralized.

This modernizing project remained in effect until the mid-1960s when the economic model that supported it started to show signs of exhaustion. Consequently, the political elite became incapable of satisfying the expectations of economic growth, which pushed the redesign of relations between the state and civil society. Other factors that forced that rearrangement were the dissatisfaction of the growing middle classes due to their lack of political representation, and the inequality generated by the model.

The administrations of Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976) and José López Portillo tried to solve these problems by reinforcing the role of the state in the economy and by opening the system to contain political dissatisfaction. However, this attempt to expand the state area in the economy faced the opposition of the business sector, which demanded less economic intervention, as they considered this the cause of the economic stagnation. Eventually, the debate around the state economic interference enabled the emergence of the statist and anti-statist cleavages, which were articulated

by the PRI and the opposition parties. The realignment of cleavages in statists and anti-statist positions was not an exclusive Mexican phenomenon. The economic crisis of the 1970s led to the collapse of the world economic arrangements that had prevailed since the end of the Second World War and paved the way for a new economic model that defended the market's liberalization.

In the next section, I will address the relevance of the political parties in the articulation of social cleavages, I briefly explain the characteristics of the statists and anti-statist cleavages, and I explain its process of development in Mexico.

The articulation of social cleavages

Pérez Díaz's approach helps explain how and why a hegemonic party system comes to an end. However, his theory is insufficient for understanding how the structural changes brought by the renegotiation of the relationship between the state and society are translated into political plurality, and how they are institutionalized. Following De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2015), I argue that the political parties, through the articulation of social cleavages, transform those structural changes in political differences that mediate the relations between state and society.

According to De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2015: 2), the articulation of social cleavages is the process by which the integral political parties politicize such divisions "[...] to build powerful blocs of supporters in whose name they attempt to remake states and societies". Not all parties are integral parties; only those oriented to transformational questions can politicize an apolitical social identity. By transformational questions, these authors refer to questionings that define the structure of society. For example, "Are we a secular or religious society?" (De Leon *et al.*, 2015: 28).

The success of the process of articulation depends on the party's capacity to take "[…] advantage of the means of articulation […]". The means of articulation are state and nonstate "[…] mechanisms that parties uniquely possess to politicize social differences that might not be otherwise politically salient" (De Leon, et al., 2015). Among those means of articulation are rhetoric, public policy, official state and paramilitary violence, co-optation, provision of social and infrastructure (a.k.a patronage), constitutional rules, peace commissions, and other civic groups, and electoral mobilization. Although the authors emphasize that rhetoric is only one of the

means of articulation, they give it a particular relevance, because through it, the parties frame in a contentious way differences that "[…] have no natural political valence of their own and thus do not, on their own steam, predispose mass electorates to do anything" (De Leon et al., 2005: 2). Following Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe ([1985] 2001), they state that the political parties "[…] articulate grievances in specific ways through the construction of 'chains of equivalence'[3]", which allows constituting the grievances into "[…] something stable that can be articulated and represented in the political domain" (De Leon et al., 18)

However, they insist that the political parties do not carry out their creative activity in a vacuum, meaning that they cannot articulate grievances as they wish. They create within limits imposed by the discursive and institutional manifestations of past articulations, which they "[…] creatively dispense with or repurpose […]" (De Leon, et al., 18). Additionally, the conditions in which the party exists can enhance or limit its ability to make use of the mechanisms for bloc building. For, example depression and recession can "[…] limit the incumbent party to direct the economy as means of articulation […]", but, at the same time can, for the same reason, enable the opposition ability for bloc building (De Leon et al., 2015: 5).

By highlighting the importance of context, De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal want to clarify that parties do not build blocs at will, that their creative capacity is limited by factors beyond their control, and by past articulations. Also, they aim to point out that new articulations tend to emerge in periods of social transformations; otherwise, "[…] current rhetoric and policy suffice to maintain existing blocs […], and emerging movements and identities simply fade" (De Leon, et al., 2015: 30). In those moments of change, the heterogeneity of social life tends to push through "new demands, sectors, and identities […]" (De Leon et al., 2015: 30), which enables the creation of new social cleavages. One of those periods of social transformation is the transition from a regulated to a market economy.

In the previous section, I indicated that, in the economic model that supported Mexico's modernization after the Revolution, the state had an essential role in promoting economic development, which meant that it created the conditions to encourage the investment of the private sector. In concrete terms, this promotion

[3] The chains of equivalence are formed when signifiers are linked together to stablish identity relationally (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 16)

materialized in the construction of infrastructure, the protection of the internal market, and the creation of financial organizations and parastatal companies.

Finally, I mentioned that, by the mid-1960s, the economic model that had supported Mexico's modernization after the Revolution started to show signs of exhaustion, which translated into the stagnation of growth. Consequently, the economic model began to be questioned by the business sector, which saw their profits reduced, particularly by the state's management of the economy. The criticism intensified during the administrations of Luis Echeverría and José López Portillo when the government's economic intervention grew in an attempt to contain the crisis. However, they were accused of populism, and the demand to control the government's intervention in the economy strengthened, particularly after the nationalization of the bank system.

The questioning of the State's economic intervention was not exclusive to Mexico. All around the globe, particularly in Western countries, economic management by the government was considered the cause of the capitalist crisis. Consequently, there was a claim to reform the economy to favor "[…] the market's economic influence over the State's" influence (Centeno & Cohen, 2012: 319), intending to free the markets from non-economic or political considerations that altered their correct functioning (Centeno & Cohen, 2012: 318). The opposition to the state economic intervention, particularly to the post-Depression and post-war Keynesian policies, was not new. However, it remained of little consequence until the 1970s, when the structures of authority weakened (Gamble, 1998: 2) and the political right, gathered around neoliberalism, articulated a new hegemonic project that rejected "[…] many of the ideas, practices, and institutions […]" (Gamble, 1998: 27) that had prevailed since the end of the Second World War.

In general terms, neoliberalism "[…] stresses the necessity and desirability of transferring economic power and control from governments to private markets" (Centeno & Cohen, 2012: 318), which are considered natural and a guarantee of individual freedom (Mann, 2012: 130). Neoliberals aimed to achieve that objective through "[…] freeing up commodity markets, and international capital flows, deregulating labor markets, balancing state budgets and generally reducing state intervention in the economy" (Mann, 2012: 130).

A faction of the political right, based on neoliberalism, articulated a political stance which its main characteristic was its anti-statism, and that promoted the

transformation of the political and economic arrangement that prevailed since the end of the Second World War. The political right aligned with neoliberalism because it provided it with the means to "[…] credibly claim the mantle of a hardheaded sober economic manager […]" that rejected "[…] financially imprudent populism" (Centeno & Cohen, 2012: 324-325). Also, the political right and neoliberalism had in common that they considered the markets as means of social integration that not only guaranteed personal freedom but also offered "[…] the best way of allocating resources, providing incentives, and stimulating growth" (Gamble, 1998).

Gamble, in his analysis of the politics of Thatcherism, refers to this political right aligned with neoliberalism as the New Right. According to him, what makes it different is that it combines the "[…] traditional liberal defense of the free economy with a traditional conservative defense of state authority" (Gamble, 1998: 28). The agreement between both principles was based on the argument that, as the state becomes more interventionist, "[…] the authority of governments became progressively weaker in the face of powerful unions and other sectoral interests" (Gamble, 1998: 28). Additionally, both considered that the socialist and social democrat programs, which advocated for the state's economic intervention, were responsible for the economic crisis, as they created "[…] inflation, mass unemployment, excessive taxation, and a swollen public sector". For the members of the new right, the only possible solution to those problems was the liberalization of the markets and the restoration of the state authority.

At first, the agreement between the liberalization of the markets and the strengthening of the state authority might seem strange. In particular, if we consider that a common feature attributed to neoliberalism is reducing the state. However, that reduction is meant in terms of its economic intervention, not in terms of its authority. The New Right considered that the state had to be strong "[…] to unwind the coils of social democracy […] to police the market order and to uphold social and political authority" (Gamble, 1998: 32). Despite having these things in common, the new right is not a homogeneous block, within it, there are factions, the liberal and the conservative being the most relevant.

The liberal strand is characterized by its defense of "[…] freer, more open, more competitive economy", and their main objective is to implement the conditions under which the markets function best (Gamble, 1998: 38). To accomplish that goal, and to correct the mistakes of the social democratic regimes, the new liberal right implemented a series of policies directed to the reduction in taxation and public

expenditure, economic deregulation, privatization of public services and enterprises, in order to keep the stability of the currency, which implied the control of inflation (Gamble, 1998: 38)

The conservative strand focuses on the restoration of social and political authority through society (Gamble, 1998: 38). From their perspective, the expansion of the state, "[…] into areas that should be left to other institutions" overburdened its authority and undermined "[…] those institutions, particularly the family, on which it depends for its support" (Gamble, 1998: 55). Additionally, "[…] the permissiveness and tolerance promoted under the liberal and social democratic regimes […]" weakened the authority of the state because it allowed "[…] subversives and militants the space they required to attack the soft underbelly of western society" (Gamble, 1998: 58).

The restoration of authority in all levels of society called for a tough government that would apply the coercive power of the state against "[…] visible agents of chaos and disorder […]" like strikers, criminals, demonstrators, and vandals (Gamble, 1998: 58). Nevertheless, the use of force was not enough; it was also necessary to change "[…] the climate of ideas that shaped the political agenda and the assumptions that governed the formulation and implementation of public policy". This ideological offensive was carried out by the neo-conservatives, who argued that "[…] modern planning by public agencies failed to observe the limits which are inherent in human action […]" and doubted the government's ability to change the nature of human beings and society (Gamble, 1998: 59).

In the United Kingdom, these two tendencies worked together and provided the Thatcherism with a political program that, at the same time, defended the liberalization of the markets and the restoration of the authority of the state. However, the coincidence between both strands did not always happen. For example, in the Mexican case, each faction of what Gamble refers to as the New Right generated a different articulation of the anti-statist pole.

Social cleavages and electoral reform in the transformation of the hegemonic party system

The link between concepts

In the previous section, I presented the theoretical framework that guided this research. I talked about party systems, the relationship between state and society, and social cleavages. In this section, I will explain how I combined them to explain the

transformation of Mexico's hegemonic party system into a multiparty system. First, following Sartori (2005), I understand a party system as the relationship between parties, which is defined by electoral competition. A hegemonic party system is a system in which the same party wins the elections over an extended period, not because there are no other parties, but because the system is fixed in favour of the hegemonic party. In contrast, a multiparty system is a system integrated for more than two parties, in which all registered parties have, theoretically, the same chances to win elections.

In this research, the concept of hegemony is intertwined with that of the party system. However, it is not reduced to the hegemonic party's predominance over the other parties in the system. It also refers to the capacity of that party to channel the context in which it exists. Among other things, through the historical project it embodies, the hegemonic party defines the terms of the relationship between the state and civil society.

Following Pérez Díaz, I understand the state as "[…] set of institutionalized positions of authority over a population in a given territory"; and the civil society as "[…] private organizations […] and individuals" (Pérez, 1987: 19). Their relationship is based on the exchange of resources, in which the main one is obedience to the state's authority. The terms of that relationship are expressed in the rules that shape the political regime, which defines the scope of the state's authority. Civil society consent to the state's authority as long as it somehow benefits it. However, the relationship's terms can be modified whenever either perceives the agreement as unfair and damaging. The change in the perception is associated with structural changes, like demographic growth or the transition from a protected economy to a market economy, which modify the context and, consequently, the terms of the relationship between the state and civil society.

In their function as intermediaries between the state and civil society, the political parties play a crucial role in redefining their relationship because they politicize those structural transformations by articulating them in social cleavages. A social cleavage is a fundamental division within society. For example, it can be a division between Catholics and Protestants or between separatists and unionists. The political parties politicize those divisions by grounding their political project on them, and, once in office, they materialize them through public policies. Also, the political parties

organize political plurality, which, as mentioned by De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2015), flourishes in those moments of structural change.

However, that political plurality is not necessarily represented in the political system; that will depend on that system's characteristics and the parties' capacity to mobilize support for their political project. For example, in Mexico's case, political plurality existed even during the period of the hegemonic party system. Nevertheless, the authoritarian characteristics of the country's political system prevented its expression.

The concepts and the case study

In this section I will provide a summary of the substantive chapters. In those chapters I will explain the process of transformation of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system in Mexico. As I mentioned in the introduction, I argue that the transition from a regulated economy to a market economy enabled that transformation. That economic change broke the political cohesion that supported the hegemonic party system, and opened up the door for political plurality. That plurality enabled the articulation of a social cleavage defined by the statist and the anti-statist poles, which redefined the relations between state and civil society.

The articulation of the cleavage and the definition of its poles was carried out by the political parties. In Mexico, the conservative version of the anti-statist pole was articulated by the National Action Party (PAN). In this case, the PAN's traditional anti-statist stance met an anti-authoritarian discourse, which together articulated a pole that mobilized members of the middle class and a faction of the national business sector to challenge the hegemony of the PRI in the polls. Since its origin in 1938, the PAN had opposed the state's intervention, not only in the economy but also in other areas, like education. Nonetheless, as occurred in other countries, this opposition remained of little importance while the dominant political discourse favored an interventionist state. However, the economic crisis that affected the country in the early 1970s undermined the validity of that discourse and questioned the state's capacity to manage the economy and set the conditions for its displacement.

Additionally, the economic crisis, and the government's response to it, enabled a breaking within the political elite, and between them and a faction of the economic elite. From those two ruptures, the one that benefited the articulation of the conservative anti-statist polewas the second because it drove some members of the

business sector into the ranks of the PAN. They were attracted by the PAN's anti-statist stance, particularly, after the nationalization of the bank system in 1982. Their incorporation into that party strengthened it as a political force, but it was not the only factor that enabled the PAN's development as an opposition. Another vital element in this process was the PAN's anti-authoritarian discourse and its contentious actions that challenged the government and the hegemonic party. These elements helped the party to obtain the support of disaffected citizens, particularly from the middle class, who saw the party as a viable and effective channel of political participation to express their discontent against the regime.

The liberal anti-statist pole was articulated from within the PRI, by a faction that came to be known as the technocrats. The details of the emergence and consolidation of this click will be explained in detail in Chapter 4. For now, it suffices that it began to rise in the early 1970s and that it consolidated with the triumph of Miguel de la Madrid in 1982. In general terms, this faction within the PRI was associated with a monetarist economic stance, which means that they opposed the increased expansion of the public sector (Centeno, 1994: 103). They also favored the liberalization of the Mexican economy and its integration into the global markets. However, until the administration of José López Portillo (1976-1982), a faction with opposing ideas controlled the government and the PRI.

It is also important to mention that the group's identification with monetarism was more conjunctural than ideological, as was shown by Miguel de la Madrid and his click during their time in the SPP. [4] In that period, de la Madrid and his group "[…] established a critical position in the strategic middle ground" between those that "wanted to stimulate production and reorganize consumption and distribution through state action", and those that were "more concerned with monetary controls and […] opposed increased public participation in the economy" (Centeno, 1994: 103).

[4] Tod Van Gunten holds that cohesion was the main feature that enabled the consensus within the technocratic elite that implemented the pro-market policies in Mexico. He understands cohesion from the perspective of network analysis theory, which means that for him, cohesion is a "structural property of the policy elites" (Van Gunten, 2015: 368). In the Mexican case, the cohesion of the technocratic elite was strong because there were many interpersonal relations that held the group together, and enabled the prevalence of consensus. By arguing this, Van Gunten is not discarding other accounts that have tried to explain the implementation of the pro-market policies in development countries through the shared characteristics of the elite members or the features of the political system. However, he asserts that, although those other factors can be relevant, they do not provide a robust explanation for the consensus within the elite and the consolidation (or not) of the pro-market policies. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that, even if ideological elements, like the adscription to monetarism, are significant factors, they are not crucial in explaining the triumph of neoliberalism in Mexico.

Since the liberal anti-statist stance emerged from the hegemonic party, its articulation could not be associated with an anti-authoritarian stance. In contrast with the conservative anti-statist pole, their opposition to the state's intervention in the economy was raised in terms of efficiency. For example, they objected to the expansion of the state-owned enterprise sector during the administrations of Luis Echeverría y Lopez Portillo and promoted their privatization.

Another element around which the liberal anti-statist cleavage articulated was the defense of the practices and institutions of the political system. As I will explain in Chapter 5, once Miguel de la Madrid came to office, he defended them against those who questioned them, particularly he guarded the presidential prerogative to choose his successor. This safeguarding of the presidential institution eventually led to the breaking of the PRI, which was essential for the consolidation of the statist cleavage.

The main elements that integrated the statist pole were its defense of the state's primacy in the management of the economy and its anti-authoritarian discourse, which focused on denouncing the government's arbitrary acts and, like the PAN, they aimed to democratize the political system.

The consolidation of the statist pole is related to the unification of various left-wing parties into a single left-wing party. Those parties came from different traditions of the left, but they shared some objectives that enabled its unification, which was a process that began with the creation of the Left-wing Coalition for the 1979 deputies' mid-term elections, and concluded with the emergence of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in 1989. The Left-Wing Coalition was integrated by the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) and other organizations that, at some point, had split from the PCM, but that rejoined for the sake of taking advantage of the electoral reforms of 1977. The PRD was a broader alliance of left-wing parties and organizations that included communists, socialists, Trotskyists, Maoists, and members of the nationalist left, which had its roots in the principles of the Mexican Revolution. Despite their differences, they all supported the State's intervention in the economy and opposed the liberalization of the national economy and its integration to the global markets. The Democratic Current (CD), the faction that split from the PRI in 1987, shared a similar position, which was opposed to that of the party's leadership and the administration of Miguel de la Madrid.

The PRI's breaking was essential for the consolidation of the statist pole because it enabled the development of the leadership of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas,

which permitted the unification of the left[5]. The split resulted from the attempts of the CD to influence the selection of the PRI's next presidential candidate. The CD was a faction within the PRI, headed by Porfirio Muñoz Ledo and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, that was against the neoliberal path that the PRI and the government had taken, and aimed to correct its course towards the principles of the Mexican Revolution.

Their attempts were rejected by Miguel de la Madrid, who, as I mentioned before, defended that the Mexican president had the prerogative to name his successor. De la Madrid wanted to exercise that faculty to select a candidate that would continue the political line of his government as was the case of Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Once Salinas was officially nominated, the members of the CD officially left the PRI, and they nominated Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas as the candidate of the National Democratic Front. The success of his campaign functioned as a gravitational center that attracted different left-wing parties and organizations.

The enthusiasm generated by the campaign of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas continued after the elections, enabling the unification of diverse left-wing parties and organizations into the PRD. The reason it facilitated the unification of the left is that it showed them that they had the chance to challenge the PRI, even in a presidential election, if they acted as a joint force. However, it is relevant to mention that the enthusiasm of the campaign could not have been translated into a long-term party option if it had not been for the unification efforts carried out by the left-wing parties. Those attempts created the mechanisms for managing the diversity within the party to allow a joint effort. The passing of time showed that those mechanisms were not sufficient to establish an institutional integration, which was made evident by the constant factional struggles within the PRD, one of which concluded with the departure of López Obrador and his team to create the Movement of National Regeneration (MORENA).

The articulation of the anti-statis/statist cleavage expressed the braking of the political unity that supported the hegemonic party system. I mentioned before that it was based on the historical project rooted in the Mexican Revolution, which aimed to modernize the country supported by an economic model in which the state was the main actor. However, in the 1970s, the model was in crisis, and its postulates began

[5] In addition of being the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas managed to attract the other left wing parties and organizations due to the success of his campaign

to be questioned, particularly the state's role in the economy. This questioning emerged from within the political elite, which perceived the state's management of the economy as inefficient, and from a fraction of the business sector, who considered the state's economic intervention as an abuse of power. The technocrats articulated the questioning from within the political elite in a liberal anti-statists pole, whereas the *panistas* articulated the opposition of the business sector in a conservative anti-statist pole. The left-wing parties and former PRI members, who were displaced by the technocrats, articulated the statist pole. Its articulation was a reaction to the articulation of the anti-statist pole, as it opposed the constrain of the state's economic role.

The articulation of that cleavage was fundamental for transforming the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system because it gave the opposition parties the capacity to mobilize their constituencies to challenge the dominance of the PRI through the polls. However, it is important to mention that, to articulate that cleavage, the opposition parties had to develop as organizations capable of doing so. They acquired this capacity through their political activity, which was demarcated by the electoral legislation.

Between 1971 to 1987, there were four major electoral reforms, which changed the terms of the electoral competition that supported the hegemonic party system by opening the political space to the opposition and by creating legal mechanisms that secured the vote validity. From these electoral reforms, the most significant was the 1977 reform, because it opened up the political system for the left-wing parties and secured the presence of the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies.

Mayor Electoral Reforms in Mexico (1971-1987)

Year of Reform	General Characteristics
1971	• Constitutional reform of articles 52, 54, 55, and 58. • Increased the demographic composition of the electoral districts. • Decreased the votes needed to get party deputies • Lowered the ages to become party deputy.
1973	• New electoral legislation that replaced the law that had been in force since 1946

	• Relaxation of the requirements for registering a political party. • Prerogatives for the political parties to establish contact with their constituencies. • More faculties to the National Register of Voters for the actualization and depuration of the electoral register.
1977	• Known as the LOPPE. New electoral legislation that replaced the one published in 1973. • Recognition of the political parties as entities of public interest. • Provisional registration for political parties conditioned to the percentage of votes obtained. • Increment in the number of deputies in the Chamber, 100 of which were selected under the principle of proportional representation. This modification assured that 25% of the seats were occupied by the opposition.
1987	• Replaced the LOPPE • Created an institutional mechanism to guarantee the PRI's majority. • Canceled the provisional registration for political parties. • Implemented renovation of the Senate every three years, instead of every six years. • Created the Electoral Contentious Court, and the Assembly of representatives of the Federal District.

In general, the opposition parties took advantage of the new prerogatives granted by the electoral law to strengthen themselves. For example, in the case of the left-wing parties, accessing the Chamber of Deputies allowed them to forge parliamentary alliances that enabled the gradual unification of the left. However, the opposition parties not only got stronger through the institutional spaces opened by the electoral reforms. They also made use of contentious actions, through which they defied the government and questioned the validity of its institutions. In this aspect, the activity of the PAN was particularly noticeable. Progressively, its members and supporters used public protest to express their dissatisfaction against electoral fraud and to demand the enforcement of the law.

To conclude, the articulation of the statist and anti-statist cleavage worked together with the electoral reforms to transform the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system. The electoral reforms, besides allowing the representation and

participation in the government of the opposition, enabled them to develop as organizations capable of articulating the social cleavage. For example, the articulation of the statist pole would not have been possible without the unification of the left-wing parties, which was facilitated by their participation in the Chamber of Deputies, which showed them the possibility of working together. The social cleavage translated into political differences the plurality that emerged due to the liberalization of Mexico's economy and its integration to the global markets, which enabled the opposition parties to mobilize their constituencies and defy and defeat the hegemony of the PRI in the polls.

Research method and data collection

I carried out this research using a theoretically driven historical analysis, by which I re-constructed the process of transformation of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system. The central concepts of the thesis were the hegemonic party system and the hegemonic party. It is important to distinguish them because the first refers to the relationship of the parties in the system, whereas the second explains the characteristics of a type of party that is predominant in a party system in which the opposition parties do not have the chance to win. Based on those two concepts, I analyzed how the relationship between the parties change to the degree in which the opposition parties were capable of contesting the hegemonic party through electoral competition. Having these concepts as a departure point helped to identify the actors and key events in the process under study.

First, the hegemonic party within the system was the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), which was created in 1946 after the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM). As I will explain in the next chapter, the hegemony of the PRI consolidated with the promulgation of the Federal Electoral Law of 1946, with which the government acquired the capacity to guarantee its predominance. Regarding the opposition parties, I focused on those to which to De Leon, Desai, and Tuğal (2015: 2) refer to integral parties, which are those that politicize social divisions with the purpose of creating blocs of supporters. Within that category were the National Action Party and the left-wing parties, particularly the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), the Mexican Socialist Unified Party (PSUM), Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), Mexican Worker's Party (PMT), which were the key actors in the unification of the left at different stages of the process.

The key events in the process can be divided into the following categories: electoral processes, the promulgation of electoral legislation, the unification of parties, and conflicts within the parties. The electoral processes that were relevant for this thesis were the presidential elections between 1970 to 1988, the mid-term Deputies elections of 1973, 1979, and 1985. After 1982, some local electoral process became relevant, as they were the first attempts of the opposition to dispute the hegemony from the PRI. The electoral laws whose promulgation is crucial to explain the process of transformation of the hegemonic party system were the electoral reforms of 1972 and 1973, the LOPPE of 1977, and the Federal Electoral Law of 1987. All of these laws changed the terms of the electoral competition in favor of the opposition.

The unification of parties relates to the left-wing parties, and the details of this process will be explained in the rest of the thesis. The first attempt to unify the left-wing parties took place in the context of the mid-term elections when the PCM and other left-wing parties created the Left-Wing Coalition to take advantage of the 1977 electoral law. The second attempt was to create the PSUM in 1981, which was created after the parliamentary experience of the Left-Wing, on an attempt to institutionalize the alliance. After the PSUM came the PMS, which, in 1987, unified the socialists and nationalists left in a single party. The final stage of the process was creating the National Democratic Front (FDN) in 1987 to support the presidential candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, and from which the PRD emerged in 1989.

Finally, the most relevant internal party conflicts occurred within the PAN and within the PRI. The internal conflict of the PAN took place in the late 1970s and had as its significant consequence the integration to the party of some disaffected members of the business sector. The conflict within the PRI began in the administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) when two factions, the monetarists and the structuralists, were confronted by the management of the national economy. The conflict concluded in 1987 when members of the Democratic Current Left the PRI to create the FDN.

The data collection used to conduct this research was a documentary collection in archives and newspaper libraries. The archives consulted were the Fundación Preciado of the PAN, the CEMOS, which has what is left of the PCM, PSUM, and PMS, and the historical archives of the PRI and PRD. In those archives, I collected information about the institutional life of the parties and their activities. Another source of information were official publications like the transcriptions of the debates from the

Chamber of Deputies in the *Diario de los Debates*, and the *Diario Oficial de la Federacion* in which the federal government publishes official announcements and decrees. From those sources, the *Diario de los Debates* was particularly useful for getting a grip on the dynamic between the parties in congress and was a great way to comprehend how the poles of the cleavage that each party represents were translated into policy.

Additionally, I collected information from newspapers and magazines like *La Nación*, which was the official communication organ of the PAN. From this magazine, I got information about the antifraud protests carried out by the *panistas* and their supporters, and information about the party's stance concerning events like the nationalization of the bank system. Another magazine in which I collected data was *Punto Crítico*, a magazine of political analysis and information published for the first time in 1972 by a group of political prisoners of the 1968 student's movement. In its pages, I found information about the left during the administration of Luis Echeverría. Also, I gathered information from *Proceso*; its first number was published in 1976, and is, until the present day, a magazine of political analysis that presented a critical point of view of current political events from a leftist perspective.

I also collected information from newspapers like *Excelsior* and *Uno más Uno*, which, at some point, held a critical stance regarding the government. Also, I used information from *El Informador*, which is a local newspaper from Guadalajara, Jalisco. The reason I used information from that newspaper is that its archive is online and it is free, and I used it when I needed a speech given by a politician or to confirm the date and place of an event. Usually, when it was a national event, this newspaper reprinted the news from *Excelsior*.

Finally, I collected information from published biographies and memoirs of politicians like Luis Echeverría, López Portillo, Miguel de la Madrid, Heberto Castillo y Porfirio Muñoz Ledo. I also got information from published interviews in books of politicians like the *panista* Luis H. Álvarez, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

Before analysing the data, I read different secondary sources that helped me to identify the key events on the process under analysis. After that, I did a chronology of the process, which enabled me to have “the big picture”. Once I had a clear idea of the process, I did a draft of the table of content of thesis, which helped me identify

which information I was going to need for each chapter. Then I proceeded to organize my data.

I mostly took pictures of the newspapers, magazines, and documents. The first step in the organization was to classify them by newspaper, magazine, or type of document. My method to organize the images by categories was very old-fashioned, I did not use any software, I just read the headings and skimmed them to know their content. Although it was a lot of work, also it helped to know my material, and to grasp details of the process that, perhaps, would have been overlooked by a software.

I did not organize all the images at once. At the beginning I only organized them by newspaper or magazine and date. I organized them by topic as I was writing the chapters. For example, to write the chapter in which I talked about the electoral reform of 1977, I organized all the images that covered that period. This way of working was time consuming, but it allowed me to perceive the development of the process, and how the electoral reforms changed the interactions between the political parties, and how those parties articulated the cleavages. Also, it allowed me to perceive the development of the opposition as a political force. This was particularly evident in the case of the PAN, because I had the opportunity to observe how the discourse in *La Nation* changed through the period under study.

It is important to mention that I did two data collections. The first one in 2018, and the second one during the two first weeks of January 2020. In the second data collection I basically collected from primary sources information that I first became aware from secondary sources. Also, after my supervisor's advice, I collected information from interviews, testimonies, and biographies from key actors, like Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, which helped me to "put more meat on the bones".

As the reader will observe, in Chapter 3 most of my sources were the speeches and law initiatives of Luis Echeverría. But, as I advance in the chapters the sources of information diversified, and I started to include the voice of other political actors. This change of type of and diversity of sources that I used in my research is illustrative of the process and shows how plurality was embodied.

Chapter 2. The Hegemonic Party System in Mexico

The main argument of this chapter is that the hegemonic party in Mexico was instrumental in the implementation of the state-led industrialization project carried out by the winning faction of the Mexican Revolution. I hold that the hegemonic party enabled the social cohesion that the government needed to implement the project because it provided the supporting social basis and the necessary channels for the resolution of intra-elite conflicts. Besides, I consider that the process of hegemony consolidation enabled the control of political plurality by incorporating or excluding from the party structure groups that could represent a threat to the regime and its project.

The control of political plurality secured the party's hegemony within the system and permitted the centralization of power in the hands of the nation's President. This process prevented the emergence of an alternative to the state-led industrialization project, enabled its implementation, and framed it as a national project and not as the plan of the group in power. This industrialization project was based on the idea that the Mexican Revolution had destroyed the country's productive apparatus and that it was the task of the revolutionary regime and the party that represented it to modernize the country. At the end of the conflict, there was not a particular industrialization agenda. However, in the framework of the Second World War, an imported substitution model was implemented.

To support those arguments, I will explain the development and general characteristics of the hegemonic party system in Mexico. For this purpose, the chapter has three sections. The first one explains the emergence and development of the hegemonic party. That section shows how the structure and aims of the party were adapted to serve as an instrument of the political elite to materialize its project of State-led industrialization. To do this, it enabled the management of political plurality, organized the key social actors in the project of economic development, and became a channel of communication between State and society.

The second section explains the process of concentration of political power in the President's hands and the control of the opposition. This last aspect was possible after the promulgation of the Federal Electoral Law in the administration of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) because it enabled the legal neutralization of groups that

threatened the state-led industrialization project. Finally, the third section of this chapter describes the context in which the hegemonic party system consolidated its structure, and the mechanisms used by the hegemonic party and the government to secure the party's position within the system.

The emergence of the hegemonic party

To understand the hegemonic party system in Mexico it is necessary to comprehend the evolution of the political party that supported it, which was not born as the hegemonic party in the system, rather grew into the role. This process has to be understood as parallel to the process of the centralization of the political power in the hands of the President because the party was instrumental in organizing and limiting political plurality and in managing the expectations and political participation of the key social actors in the system. This task was essential because it created and preserved the social cohesion that was needed to carry through the project of State-led industrialization that the winning faction of the Mexican revolution envisioned. Also, the party had the crucial role of framing that faction's project as national.

To a large degree, the success in establishing the party of the revolution as the hegemonic party depended on its capacity to control political plurality within the system, which in turn enabled them to impose their project as the national project and neutralize the opposition, whom the group in power characterized as a menace to the national interests. Also, to impose the state-led industrialization project, the hegemonic party adapted to their circumstances and incorporated in their structure essential social actors to that end.

In 1929, Plutarco Elías Calles took the first step towards the creation of the hegemonic party system and the implementation of the state-led industrialization project with the creation of the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Party of the Revolution, PNR). This party gathered the different revolutionary factions, which enabled the transformation of the group's project—represented by Calles--into the revolutionary project, which provided ideological justification to frame it as the nation's project. Also, the emergence of the PNR divided the political space between the revolutionaries and the rest. This polarization eventually permitted the identification of the revolutionary governments as the only ones capable of achieving that mission and the others as a threat.

The emergence of the *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (Mexican Revolution Party, PRM) in 1938 marks the second stage in the process. The main characteristic

of this phase is the incorporation of the masses that fought the revolution through the party's new corporatist structure. Its incorporation provided a base of social support for the party and its project and enabled their political control, which, among other things, meant they were being neutralized as a potential organized opposition to the regime.

Finally, in 1946 the *Partido Revolucionario* Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI) consolidated their hegemony in the system and implemented without obstacles the state-led industrialization project. In this last stage, the party and government reinforced their control over the workers by forcing them to collaborate in their economic project. Also, the party's identity changed, it went from being a party of revolutionaries, peasants and workers to the party of all the Mexicans.

The National Party of the Revolution (PNR)

The development of the hegemonic party system began with the foundation of the National Party of the Revolution (PNR) in 1929. Its emergence has to be understood in the context of the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution when the revolutionary factions were struggling to build a consensus that would allow the reconstruction of the state's institutions that had been devastated by the conflict. In part, this was a consequence of the predominance of local caudillos in the political scene and of the lack of a central power capable of imposing a national agenda. The opportunity to change this situation came in 1928, when Alvaro Obregon, a respected caudillo and recently elected President for the second time, was murdered. The material author of the murder was José de León Toral, a member of the National League for the Defense of Religious Freedom who opposed the anticlerical measures of Obregon (1920-1924) and Calles' (1924-1928) administration.[1] Obregon's assassination represented a menace for the political stability of the country because there was no other figure whose authority was acknowledged by the rest of the revolutionary leaders. Nonetheless, this also opened the door to guiding "[…] the country's politics in the direction of true institutional life" (Garrido, 1997: 67)

[1] The nun María Concepción Acevedo de la Llata was accused of being the intellectual author of the crime. However, there has always been the suspicion that the true intellectual author was Calles, although this has never been proven.

Plutarco Elias Calles, the outgoing President, took advantage of this opportunity and in his last address to the nation announced that

> "[…] the lack of caudillos, must allow us, will allow us to guide the country's political life through the path of a truly institutional life, trying to pass, once and for all, from the historical condition of a 'man's country' to that of a 'nation of institutions and laws'".[2]

A first step towards materializing that objective was to create "[…] an institution capable of giving order to individual aspirations" (Hernández, 2016: 20) and disciplining the revolutionaries. At this point, the strength of the central power was not enough to impose its authority on the local caudillos, which meant that the new political party had to adapt to the "real disposition of the political forces of the nation" (Segovia & Lajous: 1975: 45), and was structured as a federation of local political parties. This arrangement meant that, in exchange for acknowledging the PRM as the mediator of the country's political life, the autonomy of those political organizations was respected. In that period, that strategy proved to be successful and allowed the creation of a space in which the different revolutionary factions could solve their differences by peaceful means.

The political stability of the country was essential for carrying out its economic development, which was framed by the principles of the Mexican Revolution (Garrido, 1997: 70). In this sense, the PNR, by acting as a mediator between the different caudillos, rather than being a political party that represented the interests of a particular social enclave, was another institution in the broader "program of construction of organizations, laws, and practices aimed to pacify the country" (Hernández, 2016: 17). As can be observed, since its origins, the party, the state, and its institutions were closely connected. As time went by, that link was strengthened and gave the party leverage to access the material and ideological resources of the state and thus preserve its hegemony within the system.

In terms of the party system, the foundation of the PNR meant the beginning of the opposition's exclusion and marginalization because it divided the political space into two poles: the revolutionaries and the others. The revolutionaries, whatever that meant, were the only ones capable of carrying out the modernization of the country and materializing the principles of the Mexican Revolution. In contrast, other political

[2] *Informes presidenciales. Plutarco Elías Calles* (2006). Cámara de Diputados, LX Legislatura p. 239. http://www.diputados.gob.mx/sedia/sia/re/RE-ISS-09-06-04.pdf

tendencies represented by other parties were a menace for Mexico's economic and social development. In this first phase, the "reaction" was the targeted enemy, and it was placed on the right side of the political spectrum, identified with the Catholic Church and the landowners associated with the regime overthrown by the revolution. Eventually, the communist left-wing groups were also targeted as menaces to the system. Nevertheless, at this point, the party did not control the workers and peasants, many of whom were linked to leftist groups, and still needed them as allies.

The Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM)

Once again, the context in which the PNR became the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) is essential to understand their transformation. In the previous section, I mentioned that Plutarco Elias Calles was responsible for the foundation of the PNR, and by doing this, he created a space to help control the aspirations and conflicts between the local caudillos. Also, it gave Calles an instrument for continuing his domain over the political system after his administration, which was evident during the period known as the *Maximato* (1928-1934), when he was capable of controlling the party and the presidency without heading either. When Lázaro Cárdenas took office in 1934, Plutarco Elias Calles had the intention of continuing in his role of *jefe máximo* (maximum boss), but Cárdenas had other plans.

Unlike Calles, Cárdenas wanted to make the party an institution that would accomplish the social agenda of the revolution and continue the project of Mexico's economic development. Cárdenas was interested in creating institutions that would centralize power in the presidency, not instruments for the realization of personal ambitions. His opportunity to concretise this aspiration came in 1935 when the conflict with Calles escalated. The root of the conflict was the support and encouragement that Cárdenas was giving to the working classes to organize and strike in order to demand better conditions and, in the case of the peasants, to push for the continuation of land distribution (Meyer, 1998: 419).

In 1935 the contentious actions reached its peak and created discontent among the political elite, whose interests were directly affected (Meyer, 1998: 419). In response to this, Calles, and other politicians, openly criticized Cárdenas, which was practically an invitation for him to resign from the presidency. Instead of choosing this option, Cárdenas sought support from the labour movement, who created the National Committee for the Defence of the Proletariat to back him in the conflict. This strategy

proved to be effective; Cárdenas ended by sending Calles to exile in the United States (Meyer, 1998: 421).

In addition to what happened in the conflict with Calles, during this presidential term the masses had other opportunities to show that they had displaced the caudillos as the most important actors in the national political scene (Hernández, 2016: 49-50). This situation became particularly evident during the mid-term elections of 1936 when the PNR did not go against "local parties controlled by caudillos, but [against] independent candidates supported by local agrarian leagues and local unions" (Hernández, 2016: 47).

Those experiences demonstrated the political force of the organized masses and made evident that its incorporation into the party was essential, otherwise, its predominance and its project of economic development were threatened because the organized masses had the strength and the possibility to present an alternative project that could be more appealing to its supporters. Nonetheless, the PNR's structure had to be reformed to allow the masses incorporation in bloc. This transformation happened in 1938 when the PNR was transformed into the PRM. The organization went from being a kind of federation of parties to a corporatist structure integrated by four sectors: workers, peasants, populace[3] and military.

This new structure had significant consequences for the social, economic, and political development of the country. First of all, it enabled the control of the working classes, which was essential for maintaining the stability of the country and implementing the necessary measures to carry on with the project of state-led industrialization. In the second place, it demobilized the workers and peasants as an independent political force because it restricted their political activity to the fringes of the party (Hernández, 2016: 136). In third place, the corporatist structure created a system of counterweights between the social sectors that comprised it, which prevented their unification.

Also, the new structure granted the party a base of social support that legitimized its actions as the representative of the ideals of the Mexican Revolution and the groups that fought it. This last aspect was crucial for the future development

[3] In the creation of the PRM, the popular sector represented the members of the middle class, and was integrated by independent workers, cooperative members, artisans, students, professionals, small business owners, and "other elements related in tendencies or interests […] within the Revolution" (Garrido: 1997).

of the Mexican political system because it sealed the identification between the party, the revolution, and the national interest. From that point onwards, the leadership of the party could claim that the contemporary Mexican nation had emerged "[…] from and by the revolution; [that] the PRM represented all the revolutionary forces and that the government was the government of the PRM's revolutionary forces in support of the national interest" (Medin, 2003: 112).

The foundation of the PRM was an essential step in the fortification of the hegemonic party system for different reasons. To begin with, it framed the party's objectives as the nation's goals, which reinforced the idea that the party was in charge of leading the historical project of the materialization of the principles of the Mexican revolution and the country's state-led industrialization. Further, its corporatist structure gave it the capacity to organize and mobilize the different groups in Mexican society, which was useful for controlling them, but also for dissolving the differences between them by creating a sense of unity. Besides, it strengthened the links between the government and the party, because, from Lázaro Cárdenas onwards, the President of the republic became the *de facto* chief of the party, which gave him the capacity to perform actions that were essential for the stability of the system, like the selection of his successor and other candidates.

Nonetheless, the hegemony of the party in the system had not yet been consolidated. There were still some pieces missing from the puzzle. For example, the PRM championed "socialist" rhetoric, which created the impression that it was a class party and not one that represented the interests of the whole nation. Likewise, the party and the government were not entirely in control of the workers' movement, which could be an obstacle for the implementation of the state-led industrialization of the country. In addition, the business sector was formally absent from the interclass alliance that supported the party, which could also be inconvenient for the implementation of its historical project.

Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946), Cárdenas' successor, acknowledged all these problems and, during his administration, took action to amend those flaws. For example, in 1943, he promoted the foundation of the *Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares* (National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP), which congregated different kinds of organizations, among them were the public servants, women, and youth organizations. With the creation of the CNOP, the party

was trying to show that they were not a class party and that they "represented society as a whole" (Hernández, 2016: 56).

Another relevant modification carried out in the course of that administration was the disappearance of the military sector from the structure of the party. Manuel Ávila Camacho was aware of the danger of having the military as a distinct sector in the party, and he considered that it behoved them to be obliging towards civil authority so the army would be a guarantor of the institutions and not a threat to them (Garrido, 1997: 306). This does not mean that they were expelled from the party, rather, they were incorporated into other sectors, particularly into the popular sector.

In addition to those structural changes, there were other modifications to the PRM related to its strategy and rhetoric. It went from promoting socialist-like ideas and the unity of the working classes through a popular front to championing national unity based on a pro-democratic discourse. This transformation was favoured by the international context of the Second World War when the tactic of national fronts emerged among the Allies to face the threat of the Axis Powers, based on the idea of national unity. In contrast with the popular front, the national front sought the unity of a nation, not a particular social group the aim of this tactic was to create the idea of unity despite class and political differences. The important thing was to stick together and face Fascism, which menaced the democratic institutions of Western countries.

For the PRM, the national front tactic meant the abandonment of its class party identity and the inclusion of all Mexicans interested in promoting the country's national development and in defending its democratic institutions. As had happened with the PNR, the structure and principles of the PRM were not adequate for supporting those changes, which meant that the party had to transform itself again to adapt to the new context.

Institutionalization of the Revolution

The last transformation of the party of the Revolution took place in 1946 when the PRM became the Party of the Institutionalized Revolution (PRI), the name that it holds to the present day. As had happened before, the change was not only in name; there were also relevant modifications to its structure and substance.

In general terms, the changes to its structure aimed to reduce the strength of the corporative organizations, particularly the *Confederación de Trabajadores de*

México (Confederation of Mexican Workers, CTM), to centralize the power of the party, and to create mechanisms of political control for keeping order among its members. For example, the primary elections were reaffirmed as the mechanism to select the party's candidates as "[…] a resource to marginalize the corporations […]" from the process, and strengthen the weight of the militants that were not affiliated to any of the party's sectors that integrated its corporatist structure (Hernández, 2000: 286)[4]. It is relevant to mention that this election method was revoked after the electoral reform of 1951, which prohibited all parties to have direct election methods (Medina, 2014: 165); by then, the central authority of the party had the different sectors under its control, and none of them had the strength to challenge its authority. Additionally, another action to weaken the sectors was the individual affiliation, which also served to attract people that did not belong to either of them.

An additional modification was the creation of the National Council, integrated by one member of each sector from every state of the country; and of the National Assembly, which became the sovereign body of the party (Medina, 2014: 154). Both bodies aimed to centralize the party's power and reinforce the discipline among its members. Another measure for keeping the party members under control was the creation of two secretaries of Political Action, which were in charge of observing that the party members in the Congress, senators, and deputies, kept their party in line (Medina, 2014: 160).

The changes in the party's structure meant to strengthen its capacity as an instrument of political control by concentrating their power in the central authorities. This accumulation of power allowed the preservation of the political cohesion deemed necessary to carry on with the project of state-led industrialization, a function that became particularly important after the Second World War when Mexico's economy was inserted into the world's economy (Rodríguez, 1986: 11).

Also, there was a shift on to the course of the party's mission. This modification was expressed in the meeting that gave birth to the PRI on January 18, 1946, when it was declared that the historical mission of the PRM had ended (Medina, 2014: 159), which meant that it was time to update it. By the late 1940s, the revolution was no

[4] In contrast with the PRM, the PRI allowed the individual affiliation to the party since the beginning, with the objective of attracting members that were not part of any of the party's sectors, which served to broaden its base of social support and to counterweight the power of the corporatist organizations (Hernández, 2000).

longer an ongoing process, but something that had crystallized in institutions, which the party had to help preserve and to perfect.

An ideological turn accompanied the mission's redirection, by which the moderate members of the party allied with its conservative constituents to contain a possible rebirth of Cardenismo, to strengthen the control over the CTM and to marginalize the Communist Party from the political scene. Regarding this last point, it is relevant to keep in mind that the communists were part of the national front that helped preserve the unity during the juncture of the WWII. But, by the end of the international conflict, their presence was no longer welcome because the group in power perceived them as a menace to national unity, which compromised the pursuit of the public good embodied in the economic development of the country.

The distancing of the PRI from the communists, and its subsequent marginalization of the political system, was a clear sign that, in the future, political plurality was not going to be well received because it was considered an element that distorted the general interest. This intention of limiting the emergence of political parties was reflected in the electoral law of 1946.

The electoral law of 1946 and the consolidation of the hegemonic party system

In this section, I will address the Federal Electoral Law of 1946, which laid the legal foundations for the consolidation of the hegemonic party system. This legislation gave the federal government control over the elections, through the Secretary of the Interior. Also, the 1946 law strengthened the requirements for becoming a national party, which raised the cost of participation for the opposition. This, together with the faculty granted to the Secretary of the Interior to approve, deny or cancel the parties' registration, constituted essential mechanisms for controlling political plurality within the system.

Likewise, this section will explain some of the characteristics of the administration of Miguel Alemán, which help to understand the consolidation of the hegemonic party system and the project of state-led industrialization promoted by his government. During this presidential term, the process of concentrating political power in the hands of the president came to an end. After this administration, there were no groups capable in contending the governments of the revolution. In the course of this

sexenio[5], Alemán tamed and negotiated with the possible threats to the regime. The strategy employed depended on the group he was facing. The working classes were subordinated through the party's corporatist structure and the implementation of other control mechanisms, whereas the business sector got integrated into the system through benefits and negotiation. The root of this differentiated integration is that the revolutionary regimes needed the business sector as a partner for the country's industrialization. Therefore, the revolutionary regime needed to stimulate their collaboration, for example, through the construction of dams in agro-industrial zones, or through the exemption of taxes to stimulate production.

Also during this administration, the alliance between the PRI and the government was crystallized because the government was finally strong enough to preserve, through legal and illegal means, the hegemony of the PRI in the party system. In exchange for this, the PRI acted as a channel of communication between the State and society and mobilized its basis to support the government's policies whenever it was necessary.

The 1946 Federal Electoral Law

The electoral law that ruled the country until 1946 was passed in 1918. In general terms, the 1918 law left in the hands of the municipal authorities the different steps of the electoral process (Medina, 2014: 162-163), from the electoral register's organization to the acknowledgment of the candidates' victories. Another essential characteristic of the 1918 law is that it was lax in granting registration to political parties; the essential requirement was to have one hundred affiliates (Arreola, 1988: 171). As can be imagined, the features of that law contributed to the fragmentation of political power because it bestowed the local authorities with the legal foundations to preserve and reproduce their power. Evidently, on many occasions, those faculties were abused far beyond the limits of legality, creating the demand for impartial and democratic electoral institutions. Further, this law inhibited the institutionalization of political power.

In the first two decades after the armed conflict, the heirs of the revolution were busy developing economic and social institutions to launch the country's

[5] After Lázaro Cárdenas, the presidential term in Mexico had a duration of six years, and was known as a *sexenio*, which literally means six-year period.

reconstruction project, and the political institutions that they had developed up to that point had a clearly defined expiration date since they were created for immediate problems that obstruct the centralization of the political power. By the late 1940s, that process was almost completed: the central government had managed to tame the local powers, to develop a corporatist structure for controlling the masses, to neutralize and transform the army into a warrantor of the State's institutions, and to make the presidential figure the central piece of the political system. The only thing that was missing was the development of an electoral and a party system capable of reproducing the arrangements that enabled the political stability of the country.

Their chance for creating them occurred within the context of the presidential race for the 1946 election, when Manuel Ávila Camacho, during the last year of his administration, on December 7, 1945, sent to the Chamber of Deputies the bill for the new electoral legislation. The justification for this law was framed in the pro-democratic discourse that prevailed after the Second World War, which served the purpose of tuning the political system into the international context of the moment and calming the voice of the opposition parties, like the National Action Party (PAN), who demanded transparency in the electoral process and more democratic institutions with the active participation of the political parties in them (Arreola, 1988: 177).

Despite the democratic spirit that inspired this new electoral law, in practice, it "legaliz[ed] and channel[ed] the dominant correlation of forces" in which the bourgeoisie had to “[…] impose itself over the workers and peasants, so that balance of power could be reproduced in the electoral field” (González & Aspe, 1979). It also enabled the consolidation of the centralization of the political power and the elimination of any vestige of *caudillismo* and other forms of personal leaderships (Arreola, 1988: 170).

Among the most important innovations brought by this new electoral law was the creation of the Federal Electoral Surveillance Commission and the Council of the Electoral Register. The first entity was in charge of organizing and supervising the electoral process at a federal level (Medina, 2014: 163). Meanwhile, the Council of the Electoral Register had the responsibility to carry out the federal register of voters. The Secretary of the Interior controlled both instances, which helped suppress the local authorities' interference in the elections and to centralize its control in the executive power.

Another necessary modification introduced by this new law was the requirements to obtain registration as a national political party. According to it, the political parties had to:

I. Have a number of associates, not less than thirty thousand in the republic, provided that, at least, two-thirds of the Federal Entities were established with not less than a thousand citizens in each one.
II. Force themselves to regulate their public actions in the precepts of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States and vis-à-vis the national institutions that it establishes.
III. Include in their constitutive act the prohibition to accept a pact or agreement that forces the party to act in subordination to an international organization or depend on or join foreign political parties.
IV. Adopt their own and different denomination, according to its aims and political program, which cannot contain allusions or matters of a religious nature.
V. Organize according to the bases established by law
VI. Force themselves to channel their actions in peaceful means
VII. Formulate a political program containing the aims and means of government activity to solve national problems.[6]

To get their registration, the political parties had to submit their documentation to the Secretary of the Interior, who would grant them a certificate accrediting them as national political parties.[7] Among the documents that the parties had to put forward was a list with names and contact details of its members, which became a way in which the government could monitor and repress the opposition. In addition, this new electoral law gave the Secretary of the Interior the right to investigate the activity of the political parties, and if any of them failed to comply with the law, their registration could be cancelled temporarily or permanently.[8]

In general terms, these stipulations sought to foster the emergence of more structured and stable political parties than "those that had appeared in previous stages". However, they also "evidenced the state's pretension to control, from its origin, any organization" that could potentially endanger the stability of the system, as had happened with the parties that supported the candidacies of José Vasconcelos in 1920 and Juan Adreu Almazán in 1940 (Arreola, 1988: 179).

In addition to those changes, the Federal Electoral Law of 1946 transformed how the elections were validated, until the publication of this law that said faculty

[6] Article 25 of "Ley Federal Electoral", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, January 7, 1946 p. 4. http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_to_imagen_fs.php?cod_diario=195324&pagina=4&seccion=2
[7] Artículo 27 "Ley Federal Electoral", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, January 7, 1946 p. 4. http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_to_imagen_fs.php?cod_diario=195324&pagina=4&seccion=2 p. 4
[8] Arículo 36, "Ley Federal Electoral", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, January 7, 1946 p. 4. http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_to_imagen_fs.php?cod_diario=195324&pagina=4&seccion=2 p.4

belonged to the local governments. But, afterward, the Chamber of Deputies validated the federal elections,[9] and the local congresses the local elections. This modification to the electoral processes was a crucial element for controlling the development of the opposition parties because it consigned the government with the capacity to acknowledge, or not, the victories of those parties.

As can be observed, the Federal Electoral Law provided the legal foundations for the strengthening of the hegemonic party system that had been developing since the foundation of the PNR in 1929. This law sealed the alliance between the party and the government, which, from then on, had the legal capacities to preserve the PRI's hegemony. This law gave the government instruments that would allow them to steer political pluralism by holding sway over the registration of opposition parties, and mechanisms for limiting its growth, for example, through the validation of the federal elections or the Secretary of the Interior's power to cancel the registration when the parties did not conform to the law.

The administration of Miguel Alemán (1946-1952)

The first electoral process conducted under the 1946 law were the federal elections of that same year, by which Miguel Alemán was chosen to be Mexico's next President. This administration is considered a turning point in the country's recent history for two particular reasons: the arrival of civilians to power and the conservative spin of this administration.

Miguel Alemán was the first civilian President of the post-Revolution era, which marked the subordination of the armed forces to the executive power, although they "[…] remained a crucial instrument of the [priista] regime" as they possessed skills that were necessary to keep the social and political control of the country (Rath, 2014: 98). This subordination of the military power did not imply its depoliticization, since it continued to have an active role in the political scene, carrying out "policing functions for internal security purposes", which enabled the incumbent President to secure the "success of his political and economic programs" (Camp, 2016: 25). As I will show

[9] Article 110"Ley Federal Electoral", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, January 7, 1946 p. 11 http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_to_imagen_fs.php?cod_diario=195324&pagina=11&seccion=2

later, this was a pivotal element for reigning in the opposition and limiting the political plurality within the system.

The conservative turn of the regime manifested in different manners: from the implementation of policies that undid and limited the social achievements of *cardenismo*, to a distancing from the left and its repression. A good example of the change of policy was the amendment to the 27th article of the Constitution, which aimed to make the country more productive through the protection of private property (Álvarez-Icaza, 2001:29), a decision that translated into a decrease of land distribution. At this point, it is relevant to mention that agriculture and other primary activities financed the industrial development of the country through the exportation of its products, which made the land an essential resource for the industrial project of the regime.

The distancing from the left was connected to the desire of the moderate and conservative members of the PRI to stop the rebirth of *cardenista* forces and to secure the government's control over workers' organizations, in which members with socialist and communist ideas still had some influence. In particular, the administration of Miguel Alemán was interested in securing the loyalty and collaboration of the CTM. To achieve this objective and keep its members subordinated it was necessary to expel from the PRI and the CTM one of its founder leaders, Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who disagreed with the course that the government had taken during the administration of Alemán and suggested the foundation of a new party that would straighten that crooked path (Bolívar, 1993). His original idea was to create this new political organization with the aid of the CTM, an idea that Fidel Velázquez and Fernando Amilpa-–two leaders with close links to the government and the PRI—seemed to favour. However, when Lombardo left the PRI to establish that new political party, the Popular Party (PP), he was expelled from the CTM and left without its support. In consequence, the PP emerged without a solid social base and, hence, without the sufficient strength to oppose the official party. Besides, the expulsion of Lombardo Toledano from the CTM in 1948 meant the elimination of any obstacle for its control.

Another effect of the distancing of the political elite from the left was the cancellation of the register of the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) in 1949 (Servin, 2004: 18) after it failed to prove that it had the minimum number of members required by law. By the late 1940s, the PCM was weakened by its internal struggles, and it did

not represent a threat to the political regime. However, its marginalization was in tune with the anti-communist discourse that prevailed in the American sphere of influence during the Cold War, which reinforced Mexico's alignment to the Western democracies. Besides, the illegalization of the PCM opened up the doors to legitimize and intensify the repression of "everything that was or seemed like communist ideology, particularly against the trade union leaders that insisted on keeping their independence" (Servín 2004: 18).

The purge of trade union leaders began in 1948, before the illegalization of the PCM, with the railroad workers' union, the STFRM, its acronym in Spanish. This trade union, together with the oil and mining unions, was part of a block against the CTM (Carr, 1996: 177) that defended the independence of the workers' movement against the government. In that year, law enforcement (the police and the military), in complicity with the government, imposed Jesús Díaz de León as the STFRM leader. The support granted by the government meant that Díaz owed them his position, and, as a consequence, he was due loyalty and obedience (Medina, 1979: 129), which gave Alemán's government the perfect mechanism for taming the rebellious union and running the industry it represented. This imposition was the first, but not the last. Afterward, the government used this technique in order to make sure that the workers' demands did not exceed the limits of what was allowed, and it came to be known as *charrismo* in honor of Jesús Díaz the León, whose nickname was "*El Charro*"[10].

A final element that shows the conservative spin taken during the administration of Miguel Alemán is the strengthening of the relationship between the State and the business sector, which benefited from the import substitution industrialization policy and the public investment in infrastructure. This approach had been taking place since the previous presidential term, but it was favoured by the nationalist ideology of the *mexicanidad*[11] that characterized Alemán's presidency, which implied a national "[…] economic development based on open capitalist liberalism" (Medin, 1990: 6).

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[10] According to the Oxford online dictionary a Charro is "a Mexican cowboy or cowgirl skilled in horsemanship. The traditional charro costume is very elaborate and trimmed with silver. A man's outfit consists of a high-crowned, wide-brimmed hat, tight trousers, a white shirt, waistcoat and short jacket. A woman's outfit is a similar but with a long, wide skirt. Charros originated charrerías, the culture associated with horse-riding and rodeo skills. They also take part in festivals known as charreadas". https://www.lexico.com/es-en/traducir/charro
Jesús Díaz de León had that nickname because he used to dress like a Charro, although he was a union leader.

[11] The *mexicanidad* was a doctrine that served as support for Miguel Alemán's government. This ideology was rooted in the principles of the *filosofía de lo mexicano* [philosophy about Mexico] spread

The economic nationalism promoted by Miguel Alemán enabled the emergence of a new business faction that identified its interests with those of the state and developed "[…] permanent, organisational and in some cases even institutional relations with the government", which were based on personal connections between politicians and entrepreneurs (Salas-Porras, 1996: 47). Moreover, during the administration of Miguel Alemán, the government tried to smooth things with the business factions that had kept their distanced, as was the case of the influential Monterrey Group. The government's political will to establish ties of collaboration with this group was reflected in the selection of Ignacio Morones Prieto for the governorship of Nuevo Leon, home of the Monterrey Group, the intermediary between the government and the local entrepreneurs for resolving their differences (Santiago, 2010: 87).

Meanwhile, Alemán's administration consolidated all the institutional arrangements that centralized the political power in the executive; this was materialized in the presidential system, which rested on the President's constitutional and meta-constitutional attributions.[12] Those faculties granted him the capacity to be a mediator in the intra-elite conflicts and to act as an element of social, political, and economic cohesion within the country (Meyer, 1993). The presidential system was complemented by a party system that ensured the PRI's hegemony, which assured social support for the government's development project through the party's corporatist structure. Likewise, the electoral roll of the PRI was essential for the legitimacy of the regime because it provided candidates for every popular election post in the periodical

by the group *Hiperión*. That group aimed to find the essence of Mexico and the Mexican, to define the characteristics that made them unique. According to Ana Santos Ruiz (2012), the ideas of the *Hiperión* group served as foundation of the national identity that legitimized the post-revolutionary state by "making coincide the nature of the culture and of being Mexican with the peculiarities of the political system" (Santos, 2012: 43).

[12] The Constitution and other legislation granted the president with diverse powers, which allowed him to keep the political, social and economic unity of the system. For example, article 89 of the Constitution gave him the capacity to select his closest collaborators, and other secondary laws gave him the power to appoint members of the judiciary and the officials of decentralized agencies and state-owned companies. Also, the federal legislation granted him economic control in terms of the regulation of the "[…] control of public spending, the fiscal policy bank reserve requirements, determination of the circulating medium, stimuli and restrictions on imports and exports, and credits". Finally, the president also had the capacity to direct the country's social development through his powers in education, welfare, agrarian and labour policies. (Carpizo, 1996: 82-83).

In addition to those legal powers, the president had a series of faculties that "[…] were endorsed by all political actors and exercised by the head of the Executive" (Serrano, 2006: 1) but that were not included in any legislation. According to Jorge Carpizo, those faculties were the real leadership of the hegemonic party, the selection of his successor, and the selection and removal of state governors, and were known as meta-constitutional attributions (Carpizo, 1996: 190-199).

elections, through which government decisions were ratified, and their political power was constantly renewed (Muñoz, 2006: 40).

The golden years of the hegemonic party system in Mexico

In this section, I will explain when and why the hegemonic party system consolidated its structural characteristics, and the different mechanisms used by the government and the PRI to preserve its hegemony in the system. The crystallization of the hegemonic party system took place after the 1952 presidential elections, when the system acquired the structure it had until 1977 and when the balance of power between the PRI and the opposition was established. From then on, the government assumed its role as the party system's gatekeeper to the plurality within it. This role meant that the government was willing to do whatever was necessary to secure the PRI's victories, as was demonstrated during the presidential campaign of 1952 when the candidate of the *Federación de Partidos del Pueblo Mexicano* (Federation of the Parties of the Mexican People, FPPM), Henríquez Guzmán, and his supporters were harassed and repressed so as to prevent their electoral success. The persecution continued in the aftermath of the elections, and the FPPM lost its registration, which kept them from participating again in any electoral process.

After the elimination of the FPPM and the inclusion of the *Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana* (Party of the Authentic Mexican Revolution, PARM) in1954, the structure of the party system remained the same until the electoral law of 1977 allowed the addition of new parties. In general terms, the structure of the party system gave the impression of political plurality, but in reality, electoral competition was low. Within this party system, the PRI was placed in the centre of the political spectrum, which helped them preserve their hegemony because it fed the illusion that the party was multiclass and represented the interests of the Mexicans.

This hegemony was not only due to the structure of the system. There were a series of legal and illegal mechanisms that helped to secure the position of the PRI. Interestingly, all those mechanisms depended on public resources and/or on the complicity of the government. This fact shows the close relationship between the government and the PRI, and how reliant they were on each other.

General Henríquez Guzmán and the presidential elections of 1952

The consolidation of the hegemonic party system in Mexico took place in the 1950s (Estévez *et al.*, 2008) when the political power was centralized in the presidential figure; the PRI comprised, organized, and represented the different sectors of Mexican society and the party system acquired the shape that it maintained until the late 1970s when a new electoral law welcomed new parties into the system. Specifically, it happened after the 1952 presidential elections, when the political system resisted the threat of the candidacy of Miguel Henríquez Guzmán, who was a former revolutionary and member of the PRI that tried to become the party's candidate.

After not succeeding on his attempt, Henríquez Guzmán launched his candidacy through the Federation of Parties of the People Mexicano (FPPM), which had a peasant base of social support that opposed the agrarian policy of Miguel Alemán and defended the land distribution of the Cárdenas era (Servín, 2002: 185-186). It is relevant to mention that the FPPM also had the support of the Mexican Constitutionalist Party and of the Party of the Revolution, which were unregistered parties that incorporated former revolutionaries. This is interesting because it shows that, in a sense, the FPPM was a response to the conservative policies of the first civil government, which affected the interests of the masses that had fought the revolution and marginalized the old revolutionaries.

Despite having a certain level of popular support and a solid social base, the FPPM could not challenge the PRI as it could have been expected. The harassment and repression of the FPPM members, together with its internal disorganization, explains its lack of competitiveness and its eventual disarticulation (Servín, 2002, 201). The FPPM formally disappeared in 1954, after the amendments to the electoral law. Those reforms increased the minimum number of members needed to keep the registration, a requirement that the organization did not meet.[13]The experience of the FPPM evinced the methods that, in the future, the government would use to control political plurality within the system and secure the hegemony of the PRI.

[13] Article 33 "Decreto que Reforma Diversos Artículos de la Ley Electoral Federal", *Diario Oficial de la Federacion*, January 7, 1954. p. 3
https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_to_imagen_fs.php?cod_diario=188072&pagina=3&seccion=0

The other parties in the system

As I mentioned before, the consolidation of the hegemonic party system took place after 1952, during the administration of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, when the system acquired the structure it kept until the political reform of 1977 and new parties were welcomed into it. Once the FPPM disappeared from the political scene, the only registered parties, in addition to the PRI, were the Popular Party (PP) and the National Action Party (PAN). The last addition to the system was the Party of the Authentic Mexican Revolution (PARM), which joined in 1957.

The PP was created in 1948 under the leadership of Vicente Lombardo Toledano. This left-wing party supported state capitalism and the nationalization of key resources. Likewise, they considered that the nationalist bourgeoisie was in charge of defending the national interests against imperialism, local capitalists and landowners associated with it. A group of intellectuals, peasants, and agrarian workers integrated the party's base of social support, mainly in the states of Veracruz and Sonora. Also, it had some supporters among the teacher's schools in the countryside, which allowed it to be in contact with agrarian struggles (Carr, 1996: 202-206). The only relevant change in the party that is worth mentioning is that in 1960 it changed its name to *Partido Popular Socialisra* (Popular Socialist Party, PPS), but this did not mean a profound transformation in its principles or objectives.

The PARM was integrated by ex-combatants of the Mexican Revolution, that in 1948 congregated in an organization called "Men of the Revolution", by which they aimed to express their political concerns after the elimination of the military sector during the administration of Manuel Ávila Camacho. That association became a political party because of the personal connections between its leader, Jacinto Treviño, with president Ruiz Cortines. Also, after the electoral campaign of Henríquez Guzmán, it was evident that it was necessary the creation of an institutional channel for the political participation of the veterans of the Mexican Revolution, which had been marginalized from the system. In general terms, the program of this party was to defend the original principles of the Mexican Revolution. Of the two satellite parties, the PARM was the most dependent on the government, a fact that was evidenced in the constant electoral alchemy that the government carried out to keep it within the system to maintain the facade of political pluralism (Rodríguez, 1997: 156-161)

The PAN came to the political scene in 1939 as a reaction to the "socialist" agenda and the state-led policies introduced during the administration of Lázaro Cárdenas. The PAN was comprised of conservative intellectuals, professionals, businessmen, and catholic activists, that felt

> "disappointed with the radical turn the revolution seemed to be taking and believed that Cárdenas was responsible for institutionalizing a heavily centralized presidentialist system that threatened the very foundations of capitalism and democracy" (Mizarhi, 2003: 17).

The three social groups that supported the PAN in its origins were, firstly, the young Catholic activists, who opposed the anticlerical dispositions in the Constitution and the anti-Catholic President Cárdenas. Secondly, there were the middle-class professionals and conservative intellectuals, some of whom had held positions in past administrations, but opposed Cárdenas' "statist and corporatists policies as an assault to the market […] and political freedom" (Mizarhi, 2003: 21). Finally, the third group were entrepreneurs and landholders that were affected by the land distribution or feared that the socialist rhetoric of the time could harm their interests. It is important to mention that during the administration of Ávila Camacho, the businessmen that had initially supported the PAN left the party encouraged by the conciliatory tone of this new administration (Mizarhi, 2003: 22).

As can be observed from the three parties, the only one that had substantial differences with the PRI was the PAN. The PARM and the PP had, at least in theory, the same principles and similar objectives as the PRI. In comparison, the PAN objected to the core elements of the PRI's program and ideological principles, like the State's intervention in the economy and the anticlericalism that characterized the revolutionary government. For the members of the PAN, both characteristics represented a threat to individual freedom.

In contrast, the PP and the PARM favoured state-led industrialization, and, in the case of the former, it even advocated for the nationalization of critical resources. The function of these parties in the party system was not to offer a distinct alternative to the PRI. The role of both parties was to provide the appearance of political pluralism and to help place the PRI in the centre of the political spectrum. If they had not been included in the system, by the late 1950s the PAN and the PRI would have been the only registered parties. This situation would have created a kind of two-party system in which, probably, the PRI would have been identified with the left, and the PAN with the right. This polarization was dangerous for the hegemony of the PRI because it put

it in a position in which it could not claim to represent society as a whole and identify its project as a national one. However, the satellite parties created the necessary balance to place the PRI at the centre of the political spectrum.

Besides, the PARM and the PP were controlled channels through which groups marginalized from the PRI could have political activity without compromising the stability of the system. Nonetheless, these parties were deeply dependent on the hegemonic party, which helped them to remain part of the system. This lack of autonomy and its role within the system is why they are called "satellite parties" because they orbited around the PRI.

Keeping the hegemony

Beyond its position in the political spectrum, what gave the PRI its condition of hegemony was their capacity to control, together with the government, the electoral competition and the government's ability to constrain political plurality within the system. The mechanisms through which that control was made effective can be categorized as institutional and informal.

The institutional methods included the production, interpretation, and application of the electoral law, by which it was possible to ban and demobilize unwanted elements. Also, it was possible to relax and adapt the legal dispositions to keep in the system parties that were necessary for its functioning, as was the case of the PARM. Another mechanism to secure the hegemony of the party was the adaptation of the party's status to "favour them in mobilizing sympathetic voters" (Gillingham, 2012: 60).

Also, the government and the party developed mechanisms for maintaining internal discipline and avoiding the emergence of strong independent leaderships within its ranks through the "centralization of party selection of candidates and the neutering of the independent"(Gillingham, 2012: 61) leaderships. Examples of this were the sectoral election of the party's candidates or the fact that the members of Congress could not be re-elected, which was an obstacle for the formation of independent political capital.

In case none of the above was enough to keep out the unwanted opposition and secure the victories of the PRI, institutions like the Secretary of the Interior, the Chamber of Deputies, the electoral authorities, the regional committees of the PRI,

and the security forces (including the military) had legal faculties to control the electoral processes (Gillingham, 2012: 61). For example, the faculty of investigation of the Secretary of the Interior, through which it decided to approve, deny or cancel the registration of a political party. Another example is the validation of the elections by the Chamber of Deputies, which proved to be an advantageous mechanism in the 1980s when the opposition parties started winning municipal elections. Through this prerogative, the Chamber dominated by the PRI could declare an election cancelled if the results did not favour the official candidate.

The list of illegal methods shows the creativity and effort invested in keeping the PRI in power. Of course, coercion through hired gunman was part of it, but open violence was not the only card the PRI and the government had under their sleeve. They also used subtler methods, like persuasion, by which people were instructed as to whom they should elect and menacing them with the possibility of losing their livelihood if they did not vote for them (Gillingham, 2012: 63). Another common practice was the constant harassment by the police and security forces-–like the *Dirección Federal de Seguridad* (Federal Direction of Security, DFS)—of the opposition during their campaigns, which disrupted their daily activities and discouraged their political participation.

Finally, during election days, the party had a handful of strategies, like the *carousel* (merry-go-round), which consisted in hired squads of voters going around the polling booths voting for the PRI. Also, there was the "pregnant ballots" method, by which the ballots were stuffed with votes for the PRI. If they did not have the chance to do that, they could always steal ballots with the complicity of the authorities when they knew the results were not going to favour their candidate, or sometimes the polls closed earlier, or they could manipulate the figures during the vote counting, a practice known as *maquillaje de las cifras* -disguising the figures.

As can be observed, the range of methods to secure the hegemony of the PRI in the system was wide. There was no set recipe, they were employed according to the circumstances. Nonetheless, their use was not systematic, but strategic, particularly the illegal methods. People did vote for the PRI, the system was built in a certain way in which that party was the only viable option

The fact is that the structure of the system, together with all the legal and illegal mechanisms mentioned above, served to control political plurality and the growth of

the opposition parties–notably the PAN—within the system, which enabled low levels of electoral competition to secure the hegemony of the PRI in the party system.

Table 1 and Table 2 show a gradual decrease in the number of candidates and parties that participated in the presidential elections and on the percentage of votes obtained by the PRI.

Table 1. Candidates and Parties Registered for the Presidential Elections (1946-1982).

Election Year	Candidate	Political Party(ies)
1946[14]	Miguel Alemán	PRI
	Ezequiel Padilla	PDM
	Enrique Calderón	PNRPR
	Jesús Agustín Castro	PCoM
1952[15]	Adolfo Ruiz Cortines	PRI PNM[16]
	Efraín González Luna	PAN
	Vicente Lombardo Toledano	PP
	Miguel Henríquez Guzmán	FPPM
1958[17]	Adolfo López Mateos	PRI, PARM, and PNM
	Luis H. Álvarez	PAN
1964[18]	Gustavo Díaz Ordaz	PRI, PPS & PARM

[14] *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, September 12, 1946. http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/40/1er/Ord/19460912.html

[15] *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, September 12, 1952 http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/42/1er/Ord/19520912.html

[16] According to Octavio Rodriguez Araujo, the Nationalist Party of Mexico(PNM) was the electoral organization of the Synarchist National Union (USN) between 1951 and 1964. The USN was an organization with catholic roots that emerged during the administration of Plutarco Elias Calles (1924-1928), after the conflict between the government and the Catholic church. In spite of its anti-government origins, the PNM supported the PRI candidate for the presidential elections of 1952 and 1958, following those last elections the party lost its register. The last electoral organization founded by the synarchist was the Mexican Democrat Party in 1975, which will be addressed in the following chapters (Rodriguez, 2002: 24).

[17] *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, September 10, 1958 http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/44/1er/Ord/19580910.html

[18] *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, September 8, 1964. http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/46/1er/Ord/19640908-I.html

	José González Torres	PAN
1970[19]	Luis Echeverría Álvarez	PRI, PPS & PARM
	Efraín González Morfín	PAN
1976[20]	José López Portillo	PRI, PPS & PARM
1982	Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado	PRI, PPS & PARM
	Pablo Emilio Madero	PAN
	Ignacio González Gollaz	PDM
	Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo	PSUM
	Candido Díaz Cerecedo	PST
	Rosario Ibarra de Piedra	PRT
	Manuel Moreno Sánchez	PSD

PRI: Institutional Revolutionary Party
PDM: Mexican Democratic Party
PNRPR: National Protest Popular Revolutionary Party
PCoM: Mexican Constitutionalist Party
PNM: Nationalist Party of Mexico
PAN: National Action Party
PP: Popular Party. **PPS:** Popular Socialist Party
FPPM: Federation of Parties of the Mexican People
PARM: Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution

Table 2. Percentage of Votes Obtained by the PRI candidate in Presidential Elections (1946-1982)

Year	Percentage of votes
1946	77.90%
1952	74.31%
1958	90.43%
1964	89%
1970	85.8%
1976	93.6%
1982	71%

Source: Ariel Rodríguez Kuri (2004) "El presidencialismo en Mexico. Las Posibilidades de una Historia", *in Historia y política: Ideas, procesos y movimientos sociales,* (11), 131-152.

[19] *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, September 22, 1970. http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/48/1er/Ord/19700922.html
[20] *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara Diputados,* September 9, 1976. http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/50/1er/Ord/19760909.html

Between 1952 and 1976, the number of candidates and political parties that participated in the presidential elections gradually decreased, whereas the percentage of votes for the PRI candidate fluctuated in favour of that party. The climax of this trend was in 1976 when the only contender was the PRI-PARM-PPS candidate, José López Portillo, who got 93.6% of the votes. It is relevant to note that between 1958 and 1970, the percentage of votes for the PRI candidate steadily declined. Probably this trend would have continued in 1976 if there had been other candidates, a fact that can be inferred from the 1982 elections when there were seven candidates, and Miguel de la Madrid got 71% of the votes.

It is tempting to consider the fluctuation in those figures as a sign of loss of support for the PRI and the regime it represented, particularly the declining tendency between 1958 and 1970. However, as Jacqueline Peschard points out, during the PRI's hegemony, the elections were political rituals of little importance because, more than reflecting the citizens' preferences, they were an indicator of the governing party mobilization capacity (Peschard, 1995: 344). Therefore, she considers that to understand the citizen's support for the regime, the figures that should be considered are electoral abstention since it was out of the PRI's mobilization and control capacities(Peschard, 1995: 345).

In her paper, she acknowledges that electoral abstention during the PRI's hegemonic rule has been little studied. Nevertheless, she presents the percentage of people who voted in the deputies' elections and the percentage of votes obtained by the PRI and the opposition between 1952 and 1994 on those elections, from which electoral abstention can be inferred.

Table 3 shows the percentage of votes cast and no-turnouts between 1952 and 1988. As can be observed, there was a decline in the votes cast and a concurrent increase in the non-turnouts. The decline and increase in the figures are not steady, and there is fluctuation. The citizens' participation tended to be lower in the mid-term elections and higher in the elections that coincided with the presidential elections. The reasons why that happened are beyond the scope of this investigation. However, as I mentioned before, those figures show an evident decline in the votes cast and an increase in the no-turnouts, which went from 25.5% in 1952 to 49.8% in 1988.

Table 3. Percentage of Votes Cast and Votes Obtained by the PRI and the Opposition in the Elections of Deputies (1952-1982)

Year	Votes cast	No-turnouts
1952	74.5%	25.5%
1955	68.8%	31.2%
1958	71.6%	28.4%
1961	68.3%	31.7%
1964	66.6%	33.4%
1967	62.9%	37.1%
1970	64.3%	35.7%
1973	60.4%	39.6%
1976	62.0%	38%
1979	49.4%	50.6%
1982	66.8%	33.2%
1985	50.6%	49.4%
1988	50.2%	49.8%

Source: Jacqueline Peschard (1995) "La Explosión Participativa, México 1994", *Estudios Sociológicos*, p. 343.

Electoral abstention is not equal to non-turnout figures[21]. However, the latter can serve as an indicator of the former, particularly in no-choice elections. In those contexts, "[…] even numerical minor no-turnouts "attains significance as a deliberate act of dissatisfaction" (Karklins, 1986: 449).

In the Mexican case, the regime's lack of support started to become evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the country entered a political and economic crisis, which eventually forced the transformation of the hegemonic party system to a multiparty system in the 1980s. The first sign of that crisis was the economic slowdown during the administration of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), but the event that made it undeniable was the 1968 students' movement, all of which is going to be addressed in the following chapter.

[21] It is also crucial to consider other variables like the population eligible to vote and the registered voters. However, due to the COVID'19 restrictions was not possible for me to access the necessary data.

Chapter 3. The Emergence of Political Plurality and Echeverría's Democratic Spirit

The hegemonic party system consolidated at the beginning of the 1950s, and during that decade, and most of the 1960s, it was one of the pillars that enabled the political stability that enabled for Mexico's economic growth. It is relevant to mention that political stability and economic growth reinforced each other, meaning that the former permitted the later. This mutually beneficial relation began to erode in the late 1960s when the economic model started to show signs of exhaustion, and groups that were out of the corporatist structure started to manifest political discontent. As a consequence of those elements, the foundations of the hegemonic party system began to be gradually destroyed, opening up the door for the emergence of political pluralism, which will be the subject of this chapter.

I argue that the erosion of the hegemonic party system was the result of the response of Luis Echeverría's administration to the political and economic crisis that hit Mexico in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Echeverría's intentions were far from wanting to open the doors to political plurality. His objective was to restore the foundations of the post-revolutionary regime and recover control of national politics and the economy. Nonetheless, the policy actions of his administration transformed the foundations of the hegemonic party system by easing the restrictions to the opposition and by changing the terms of the historical project that had provided political cohesion within the system and justified the existence of the hegemonic party, which until then had been the economic development of the country focused in the generation of wealth, not in its distribution. Therefore, another claim of this chapter is that the emergence of political pluralism was an unintended consequence of Echeverría's reformist actions.

In concrete terms, the factors that led to the changes in the party system were the rupture of political unity, the independent organization of civil society from the corporatist structure, and the strengthening of the opposition parties. As will be explained in this chapter, the rupture of the political unity was the result of the conflict between the Echeverría administration and a faction of the business sector in relation to the economic model, which led them to organize and seek spaces of political participation to express their opposition with the government. Also, the intra-elite division jeopardized the political unity within the system. The implementation of a new

economic model confronted the economic and political elite and broke the unity that had prevailed until then. However, I will address this struggle in the next chapter.

The independent organization of the civil society was headed by the 1968 student's mobilization, which contested the authoritarian characteristics of the political system and demanded its democratization. This appeal was not new; before student activism, other mobilizations had demanded democracy and protested against the authoritarian features of the system. However, the students were not part of nor were they connected to the PRI's corporatist structure. Therefore, they could not be controlled through it. This situation drew attention to the necessity to reform the system in order to incorporate those social sectors that were out of it. Also, the political awakening of some sectors of civil society, and their demands for democracy, coincided with the beginning of Mexico's economic crisis. This context created the opportunity for the mobilization and organization of political groups that sought to defend the interests of the masses, which led to the (re)emergence of left-wing political parties, like the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) and the Mexican Workers Party (PMT).

As was mentioned above, the student's mobilization alerted to the necessity of reforming the political system. In response to that warning, the administration of Luis Echeverría carried out a series of reforms to the electoral legislation, which strengthened the presence of the opposition political parties in the system, particularly the National Action Party (PAN), which in subsequent administrations would welcome and articulate the political discontent of some factions of the business sector.

In the first section of the chapter, I will address the economic crisis and its political consequences, like the conflict with the business sector, which had as its main repercussion the breaking-off of the unity between the government and a faction of the business sector, leading their organization to seek spaces of political representation. Also, in the first part of the chapter, I will deal with the organization of left-wing parties in defense of the interest of the popular sectors, as was the case of the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) and Mexican Workers Party (PMT). In the second part, I will explain the students' movement and its relation to the political reform carried out during the Echeverría administration in order to respond to the necessity of transforming the political system, which consisted in the constitutional reforms of 1971 and the new electoral legislation of 1973, granting rights to the political parties that aimed to

strengthen their capacity for channeling political pluralism through existing political institutions.

As the reader will notice, Luis Echeverría Álvarez, Mexico's president between 1970 to 1976, is the protagonist of this chapter. For most of the 20th century, Mexico had a highly centralized presidential system, in which the president was indisputably the most important actor, among other things, because he was crucial in keeping the unity within the political system.

Considering that, Echeverría's actions to deal with the country's economic and political crisis at the beginning of the 1970s significantly impacted the political system. His policy decisions changed some of the terms in which the hegemonic party system had been supported until then. For example, up to that point, national political unity was based, among other things, in the agreement around the economic model; and the control of pluralism through the electoral legislation. However, he tried to implement a new economic model that broke that agreement and introduced transformations to the electoral system, which relaxed the restrictions towards the opposition.

Therefore, most of the data collected for this chapter comes from Echeverría's campaign speeches, in which he launched and justified his political project; the law initiatives that accounted for his reforms, and other statements printed by the press in which he expressed his points of view regarding specific matters. In addition to that, there were other sources of information, like the magazine *Punto Crítico* and documents from the Mexican Communist Party, which were crucial for addressing the left-wing parties.

The economic crisis and its consequences for political pluralism

This first section of the chapter is divided into three parts. In the first one, I will explain the characteristics of the economic model implemented in the late 1950s and why, by the late 1960s, it had reached its limits and was showing signs of exhaustion. In addition, I address the economic model suggested by Luis Echeverría's administration and the quarrel it caused with the business sector, which eventually led to the rupture of the political unity that had prevailed in Mexico from the 1940s until then. Finally, in the last part, I explain that during the Echeverría administration, left-wing parties, like the PCM and the PMT (re)emerged in the political scene to organize the masses in the face of the economic crisis.

The beginning of the economic crisis

The 'stabilizing development' (*desarrollo estabilizador*) was the model that supported the economic development between 1958 and 1970, a period in which Mexico had an average annual growth of 6% (Turrent, 1999: 296). Its principal architect was Antonio Ortiz Mena, who was Secretary of the Treasury during the administrations of Adolfo López Mateos (1958-1964) and Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970). According to him, the strategy followed by this model consisted of acting:

> "[…] on the economic factors that determine savings and in adapting policy measures to speed up the process and relocate savings from where they [were] generated to where they [were] used, to achieve an efficient allocation of resources" (Ortiz, 1970: 420)

In concrete terms, that translated into a combination of a tax policy that favored reinvestment and encouraged "the most productive investments through subsidies and exemptions", and the control of the inflation and the exchange rate (Ortiz, 1970: 420-421), which remained in 12.50 pesos per dollar from 1954 to 1976 (Moreno-Brid & Ros, 2010: 706). Also in this model, the role of private capital and the government were well defined. The former was assigned the part of "[…] fostering Mexico's economic growth", whereas the latter was in charge of assuring the conditions required by the investment of domestic and foreign capital; that is to say, political and economic stability, which meant a favorable fiscal climate and a stable exchange rate (Centeno, 1997: 98).

Given the growth rates and economic stability associated with the model, it can be said that the stabilizing development was successful in macroeconomic terms. However, a closer look will show that it was not exempt from problems, which led to its erosion and an eventual halt of Mexico's economic growth. According to Enrique Cárdenas, the three main weaknesses of this model were economic protectionism, the deterioration of the agricultural sector, and the gap between domestic savings and investment (Cárdenas, 2015). Protectionism was a double-edged sword; on the one hand, it allowed the rapid growth of the industrial sector, the development of internal business capabilities, and the generation of well- paying jobs (Cárdenas, 2015: 286). But at the same time, "[…] it imprinted strong distortions in the use and allocation of resources, affecting the balance of payments and the potential for long-term growth", (Kuntz, 2015: 40) because it affected the competitiveness of the national industry abroad and its capacity to generate employment. It is essential to mention that this last aspect was correlated with the high production costs and uncertainty associated with

official unionism, by which salary increases were the result of political factors, which left some business vulnerable, and eventually made them non-viable, as was the case of the sugar mills (Cárdenas, 2015: 286).

The deterioration of the agricultural sector was linked to the decrease in federal investment, the warranty pricing policy implemented for fomenting the production of low-cost food, the reduction of the international prices of agricultural products, and the insecurity in land tenure related to the policy of land distribution. All these factors contributed to the contraction of exports in the sector, which led the government to resort to public borrowing of external resources to complement the foreign currency needed for financing national development. Besides, the decline of the agricultural sector slowed its capacity for absorbing labor, which intensified the migration from rural to urban areas, swelling the outskirts of the city with marginal unregulated settlements (Cárdenas, 2015: 288).

The last problem associated with the stabilizing development model was the trade deficit, which led to the gradual dependency on imported goods, a phenomenon that was mainly the result of the decay exportation of agricultural goods. In the early 1960s, the external debt was equivalent to 6.1% of the GDP, and by 1970 that percentage had increased to 9.2%. That rise was a sign of alarm that announced a crisis that exploded in the middle 1970s when external indebtedness reached its limit (Cárdenas, 2015: 288)

The problems associated with the stabilizing development eventually slowed the continuation of the country's economic growth and generated other problems, such as inequity in the distribution of wealth and the government's external indebtedness. The inequality might seem puzzling, considering the 6% average growth during the period. Nevertheless, it is less difficult to understand if we think about the low tax collection, the low generation of employment, and the low private sector reinvestment rates associated with the economic model. Those and other factors led to an increase of inequality, as shown by the Ginni coefficient in table 1.

Table 1. Inequality (Ginni coefficient)

Year	Ginni coefficient
1950	.52
1963	.54
1968	.59

Source: Judith Teichman (2012). *Social forces and states: poverty and distributional outcomes in South Korea, Chile, and Mexico*. Stanford University Press, p.185.

Inequality and external debt were economic and political problems. In the case of inequality, on the one hand, it constrained the expansion of the internal market, which was an obstacle for the growth of an economy dependent on it. On the other hand, the concentration of resources in the hands of a few, and the correlated deterioration of the living conditions of the many, eroded the legitimacy of a government whose ideological support was the Mexican Revolution and its ideals of social justice.

The capacity of the Mexican government to contract foreign debt increased during this period due to the stable conditions of the national economy. This instrument was used as a means of obtaining resources to complement the insufficient national savings, which lead to the growing indebtedness of the country (Giron, 1991: 54). As was mentioned before, by the late 1960s the external debt was not the problem that it became in the second half of the 1970s, but the Mexican economy started to show signs of dependency with the exterior, which went against the nationalist rhetoric that had been used to justify the economic project.

A new economic model

The political crisis and Mexico's inequality problems caused by the development model (Moreno-Brid & Ros, 2009: 215) were not unnoticed by Luis Echeverría Álvarez, the PRI candidate and future president of Mexico. During his campaign, he launched a political project that intended to redeem the principles of the Mexican Revolution (Lentil, 2017: 73) as an attempt to solve the country's problems. For him, the revolution "[…] was unfinished, and admitting it accelerat[ed] its march"[1], whose direction, "upward and onward", became the slogan of the campaign. According to Echeverría, the Mexican Revolution moved upward because

> "[…] the line of Mexico's destiny is of overcoming and projects above the factions and partial interests, extremisms and intolerances, and departs as much from social anarchy as from state tyranny".[2]

And it moved onward because its march was "[…] towards the progress of freedom, towards the transformation of society and the integral improvement of Mexicans",

[1] Luis Echeverría (1969), *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, p. 21.
[2] Luis Echeverría (1969), *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, p. 21.

which could only be achieved through the principles of the Mexican revolution imprinted in the 1917 constitution.

Contrary to his predecessors, Echeverría considered that the materialization of the revolutionary goals was a joint responsibility between the government and the different sectors of society. According to him, both parties had to act together and put the best interests of the nation before those of parties and groups (Echeverría, 1980: 20). Following this, the axis of his project was the democratization of the political system and the implementation of a new economic model, known as *Desarrollo Compartido* (Shared Development).

In general terms, Echverría's democratic project aimed to reform the existing political institutions with two objectives: incorporate the sectors that were out of the system, and mobilize the basis of social support of the PRI and the government to push the implementation of his economic project. I will address the details of Echeverría's political reform in detail further on in the chapter. At this point, the important thing to keep in mind is that for this administration, democratization was not an end by itself, but a means of implementing a new economic model, as was expressed continuously during the presidential campaign.

For example, in Cananea, Sonora, in an homage to the miners considered precursors of the Mexican Revolution, Luis Echeverría expressed that a more vivid political activity was needed because the compliance of obligations was not enough, it was also necessary the demand and exercise rights "[…] so that our political democracy becomes, increasingly, an economic democracy".[3] This call for a more vigorous political participation on behalf of the citizens has to be understood in the co-responsibility frame stressed by Echeverría during his campaign, which emphasized that the economic and political development of the country was a shared task between the state and the different social sectors.

In addition to this, for Echeverría the democratic functioning of the base organizations was essential because it was there where democracy began and their proper operation was indispensable for the smooth running of the public administration, as he expressed during his acceptance speech in November of 1969:

> Democracy must start from the clean election of student societies, of company boards of directors, executive committees of unions and cooperatives, *ejido*[4]

[3] Luis Echeverría (1969). *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, p. 372.
[4] Ejido: (in Mexico) a piece of land farmed communally under a system supported by the state.

> commissioners, and all other forms of social connection and representation. The tendency towards a comfortable life often leads us to the detriment of hierarchies that makes administrative organization impossible

Regarding the new economic model, as mentioned before, it came to be known as "Shared Development", and, as its name indicates**,** it was based on the principle of co-responsibility between state and society, just like the political development of the country. However, in contrast with it, in this case, the task was mainly left to the business sector, and not the popular sectors, because it was considered that they had the responsibility to invest its money in the country to contribute to its economic development. From Echeverría's point of view, the wealthy classes were "co-responsible, together with the state, for creating employment for the majority [of the population]" and were "obliged to decrease their superfluous consumption expenses".[5]

This last point was relevant because according to Echeverría the "ostentatious parties and the travels abroad", and other expenses made in "unnecessary articles and imported gifts, which were often tacky and false acts of philanthropy", were advertising displays that only benefited the one that made them but hindered the generation of internal savings and investment.[6] Instead, the wealthy had to invest their money in productive projects and infrastructure, which was a "patriotic investment, but also, in the not-too-long term, a good business".[7]

In contrast with the stabilizing development, the priority of the shared development model was the disadvantaged sectors of the population, which, according to Echeverría, was in keeping with the PRI as "[…] a nationalist, anti-imperialist, worker, agrarian and defender of popular culture" party (Echeverría, 1980: 107). Beyond the rhetorical component of this conception, one of the main objectives of this new economic model was to solve the inequality problems of the country. That was important for political and economic reasons. On the one hand, Echeverría was interested in renewing the revolutionary credentials of the PRI and its governments, which meant the compliance of "social justice that motivated the revolution and

https://www.lexico.com/definition/ejido

[5] Echeverría (1969) *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, p. 31

[6] Echeverría (1969) *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, p.112.

[7] Echeverría (1969) *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, p.30.

continued to drive it".[8] On the other hand, solving the inequality problems was indispensable for promoting the expansion of the internal market, which was intended to avoid the external dependence of the Mexican economy.

After a long campaign, and to no one's surprise, Echeverría won the 1970 elections. In his swearing-in as president, he reaffirmed the political program that he had launched during his presidential tour. In particular, he stressed that economic development should not be an objective by itself, but a means to an end, which was the improvement of the living conditions of the Mexican working classes. In 1910, the Mexican Revolution was fought to abolish the privileges of the landowning classes. Now, the revolutionary government was responsible for preventing wealth accumulation in a few hands and the majority's exclusion from its benefits.

Additionally, he acknowledged that Mexico had changed since the early 1900s and that it faced problems that had not been considered, like the exponential growth of the population and the regional development differences. These problems demanded immediate action through the creation of new employment sources[9] and better distribution of wealth. Furthermore, once again, he pointed out that the collaboration of the wealthy sector was crucial, but he also mentioned that the economic development of the country was a shared task with the public sector, which was going to have the lead role in the process. Because "freedom of business [could] only be fruitful if the Government has sufficient resources to coordinate the accomplishment of the great national objectives".[10] Finally, Echeverría called for the improvement of the electoral process, and the strengthening of the political parties and the ideological activity, because the citizens needed to be "[…] more demanding with the Powers that [they] have formed".

As it can be observed, Echeverría was aware that a change of direction was necessary, mainly in the economy. For him, the solution to the country's problems was in the transformation of the development model, which until then had been generating wealth, but not distributing it. That situation was affecting the economic growth of the

[8] Echeverría, Echeverría (1969) *Pensamiento. Doctrina: Discursos. Campaña Electoral (1969-1970)*. México. Partido Revolucionario Institucional.
[9] Echeverría, "Discurso de toma de posesión de Luis Echeverría Álvarez", en *Historia documental del PRI. Tomo 9. (1969-1976)*, Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Instituto de Capacitación Política, p. 285.
[10] Echeverría, "Discurso de toma de posesión de Luis Echeverría Álvarez", en *Historia documental del PRI. Tomo 9. (1969-1976)*, Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Instituto de Capacitación Política, p. 286.

country and the legitimacy of revolutionary regimes because they were not able to honor the promises of social justice of the Mexican revolution. In contrast with the stabilizing development, in the shared development model that Echeverría was trying to implement, the state and the different sectors of society were co-responsible for the country's economic growth. However, the heaviest burden of that responsibility was for the wealthy sectors of society, which were expected to collaborate, motivated by their patriotic spirit.

In contrast with the deep transformations aimed for the economic model, it seemed like Echeverría considered that the political system did not need a profound transformation. Apparently, it only required some adjustments in the electoral legislation and the mass organizations to make them more combative for the defense of their rights and an adequate intermediator between state and society. In this sense, those organizations were going to help the Echeverría administration to push the wealthy sectors in doing their part. Nevertheless, beyond that, the new president did not contemplate that the political system needed any other transformation, not even after the 1968 events, which he considered that a mild opening in the system, through some electoral reforms, could solve.

Nonetheless, he was not counting on the fact that those mild changes to the electoral system in combination with the economic transformations that he tried to implement were going to transform the political system profoundly. As will be explained later, the electoral reforms enabled the strengthening of the opposition political parties, and, in the case of the economic transformations, this permitted the redesign of the relations between the state and the civil society, because the business sector interpreted them as prejudicial for their interests, which drove them to seek the expansion of their margin of action against the state (Pérez Díaz, 1987: 21).

The quarrel with the business sector

Since the first year of his administration, Echeverría encountered resistance to the implementation of his reformist program. In concrete terms, this opposition came from a faction of the business sector that publicly questioned his economic program and some of the reforms he was trying to implement. The Employers' Confederation of the Mexican Republic (COPARMEX)[11] expressed the dissenting voice of the business

[11] "The Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana (COPARMEX, or Employers' Confederation of the Mexican Republic) is a Mexican employers' organization created in 1929 to oppose government

sector through a press release. In that document, they manifested their "[…] disapproval with the tax on luxury items, with the new prices authorized for other products and in general with the economic measures adopted by the regime of President Echeverría […]", which they considered were "[…] conducive to inflationary pressures and the increase of the cost of living"[12].

Echeverría responded by telling them that he found the allegations unfair, and that, instead, the president of the COPARMEX should be "[…] recommending to his partners in the association to watch over the patriotic interests that each Mexican industry represents".[13] Also, he accused them of not being objective in their comments, because they were not acknowledging that the inflation and the increases in the cost of living were

> "universal, and that the private sector [was] importing machinery and raw material in prices that [were contributing] to the inflation; and that there were speculators and hoarders in many businesses that [had contributed] to the inflation and the artificial rise [of prices]".[14]

Finally, Echeverría made it clear that it was not the government's responsibility to consult them about policy decisions that did not concern them directly. He advised them not to confuse "the elastic forms of Mexican social and political coexistence, with what the Constitution ordered, and expect the Executive to subject its bills to a private organization".[15]

The president's reaction was celebrated by union and peasant leaders, like Hermenegildo Aldana, from the Union of Chemical, Petrochemical and Carbochemical Industry Workers, who considered that the COPARMEX "[…] represented the worst and most negative interests of the hoarders and money-grubbing", which "[…]

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intervention in the economy. The main difference between COPARMEX and other entrepreneurs' organizations is its independence from the Mexican government in institutional and political terms. This independence enabled COPARMEX to be more straightforward in its criticisms of policy making in Mexico, but it also reduced COPARMEX's capacity to gain government favors for its members. Unlike other employers' organizations that were led by businessmen from Mexico City (such as CONCANACO or CANACINTRA), COPARMEX's leadership originated in the northern city of Monterrey".
Sergio Silva-Castañeda, "Confederación Patronal de la República Mexicana (COPARMEX)." *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, edited by Jay Kinsbruner and Erick D. Langer, 2nd ed., vol. 2, Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008, p. 571. *Gale eBooks*, https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/apps/doc/CX3078901649/GVRL?u=ed_itw&sid=GVRL&xid=8821d2df. Accessed 6 May 2020.

[12] *El Nacional*, January 29, 1971.
[13] *El Nacional*, January 29, 1971.
[14] *El Nacional*, January 29, 1971.
[15] *El Nacional*, January 29, 1971.

systematically had attacked all governmental measures for the benefit of the people". Also, Aldana stressed that the COPARMEX founder, Honorato Carrasco, "[…] was the spokesman of the Monterrey business class and that as such he fought Cárdenas and the oil expropriation".[16]

As well, as expected, Echeverría's words were supported by the PRI, which stressed that the Mexican revolution had created a mixed-economy regime, in which the state had encouraged the development of the business class through "plenty infrastructure works" and a "vigorous nationalization policy of the main energy sources, which was the base of the national development, [and] consequently, of the growth of the business sector".[17] Also, it stressed that the COPARMEX only represented a fraction of the business sector and that the revolutionary state was not going to be pressured by any group, because it represented the interests of the people.[18]

After this first confrontation, the quarrel between the Echeverría administration and the business sector escalated. It reached its peak in 1973 when they questioned his fiscal policy, the role of the state in the economy, the labor policy and the measures taken to materialize the democratic opening of the system—particularly the tolerance of independent union movements and an apparent decrease of repression towards left-wing movements (Arriola, 1976: 457). On the surface of the conflict, the problem seemed to be that Echeverría was breaking an implicit pact between them and the revolutionary governments, by which the business sector limited its political activity in exchange for being consulted on economic issues (Luna, 1992: 35).

However, the conflict's root was more profound than that and can be found in the change of economic model, by which Echeverría tried to recover the state's control over the economic development of the country and modify its goals, which went from being the growth of the economy to the improvement of living conditions of the disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, how it was framed and executed created the impression that the state's economic intervention was opposed to the activity of the private sector, and not complementary, as it had been until then (Luna, 1992: 35 &38).

In other words, the economic projects of the state and a part of the business sector were based on different rationalities. According to Matilde Luna, the economic

[16] *El Nacional*, January 30, 1971.
[17] *El Nacional*, January 30, 1971.
[18] *El Nacional*, January 30, 1971.

policy pushed by the Echeverría administration was based on "populist rationality", whereas the business sector, and some members of the political elite defended "technical rationality". The first one, "[…] contemplated the state's intervention in strategic areas for the economic development […] and the state's intervention in the resolution of social problems", which was perceived by the business sector as a risky investment. In contrast, the technical rationality, better known as neoliberalism, favored those activities that strengthened the private sector (Luna, 1992: 41).

This difference in substance had significant consequences for the political system because it led to the end of the agreement previously mentioned that had prevailed between the business sector and the government, which led to the breaking-off of the political cohesion that had supported Mexico's political development until then, opening up the door for political plurality. A clear manifestation of the alteration in the political cohesion was the creation of the Business Coordinating Council (Consejo Coordinador Empresarial, CCE) in May 1975.[19] This organization aimed to represent the interests of the businessman as a sector in the negotiation with other sectorial organizations like the Congress of Work or the Permanent Agrarian Congress. Likewise, from that point onwards, the CCE became their mouthpiece, which enabled them to jointly express their opinions and positions regarding policy decisions or other issues on the national agenda.

Concerning the core point of Echeverría's economic model, the distribution of wealth, they expressed that they accepted it "[…] but that they rejected the idea of the distribution of poverty". According to them, distributing poverty was "the distribution of a hundred unities of a person between a hundred people that did not have anything. That was not distributing wealth, but poverty". [20] With this declaration, the CCE members were showing that their opposition to Echeverría's economic model was based on the misconception that it was going to distribute their wealth amongst the poor, making everyone equally poor.

This confrontation, and the politicization of the business sector, continued during the next administration when some businessmen joined the PAN searching for

[19] *El Informador*, May 8, 1975.
The CCE was integrated by the leaders of Confederacion de Camaras Industriales, Confederacion de Camaras Nacionales de Comercio, Confederacion Patronal de la República Mexicana, Asociacion de Banqueros de Mexico, Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios y la Asociacion Mexicana de Instituciones de Seguros
[20] *El Informador*, May 7, 1975.

political representation. As well, during that *sexenio* became evident that Echeverría's policy direction also divided the political elite. The rupture between the faction that supported it, and the one that opposed grew during the administration of José López Portillo (1976-1982). However, it was until 1987 when members of the Democratic Current left the PRI, causing a definitive break.

The organization of the left(s)

In Mexico, like elsewhere in the world, the spectrum of the left is relatively broad, which means that there are different left-wing factions, some of which in theory might seem to pursue the same objective, but that in practice have significant differences that hinder their organic unity. This situation was the case of the nationalist and socialist left in Mexico during the 1970s and most of the 1980s. Both currents identified the necessity to organize the popular masses in order to fight their precariousness caused by the economic crisis, but their differences prevented their unity. The socialist left was represented by the Mexican Communist Party (PCM), and the nationalist left was represented by the Mexican Workers Party (PMT). The aim of this section is to describe the conditions of the Mexican left-wing parties, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which will help explain why they were incapable of mobilizing the mases against the crisis.

The PCM

Since the 1940's the PCM had lost its registration as a political party, therefore, since then its attempts of electoral participation were illegal, which put their members in a vulnerable position as the government could easily repress them. Likewise, it meant that it was difficult to measure the success of their efforts in terms of electoral votes because their candidates did not appear in the ballots, and the possible votes they may have gotten were registered under the category of "others", a vague category that accounted for any name voted for but not registered.

Before 1977, the last time they tried to participate in a presidential campaign was in 1964, when they supported the candidacy of Ramón Danzos Palomino in alliance with other left-wing organizations, through the Popular Electoral Front (FEP) (Gaxiola, 2014). But, after this experience, the PCM decided not to participate in other electoral processes because they considered them a scam. As a matter of fact, since October 1969, the PCM's political strategy was based on the "active abstention". This

strategy aimed to protest against the country's undemocratic conditions and to push for the system's reform (Concheiro, 1985: 333-334).

However, in the context of the Echeverría administration, the PCM concluded that there were only two solutions to the political and economic crisis of the country: the strengthening of the fascist features of the political system, and the direction of the country towards monopolistic interests (Concheiro, 1985: 349); or the workers, peasants, intellectuals and middle classes joining together to "impose a 'democratic and socialist' way out" of it.[21] This analysis of the crisis by the PCM led the party to change its tactic and appeal to the unity of action of the left forces (Rodríguez, 1997: 98), which meant that the PCM tried to establish a strategic alliance with other parties.

In the next chapter, I will explain that not all the left-wing parties that existed at the moment considered the elections a viable means of political participation, and still held no participation in the elections as a tactic to protest against the system. Nevertheless, there was a shift in the PCM's strategy in favor of participating in the elections. Also, they considered that the way out of the crisis was the implementation of socialist democracy, and that, in order to achieve that, they deemed necessary to establish an alliance with other left-wing forces.

The PMT

The Mexican Workers Party originated, together with the Socialist Party of the Workers (PST), in the National Committee of Auscultation and Coordination, which was founded in November 1971 (Fernández, 1975: 83), to create a new mass political organization "independent, revolutionary […] that could serve as an effective and permanent instrument of struggle for the working Mexican people" (Rodríguez, 1997: 180). Among the founders of that political organization were personalities like Octavio Paz, former Mexican ambassador in India and Nobel laureate; Heberto Castillo, member of the National Liberation Movement (MLN) and the Teachers Coalition; Demetrio Vallejo, leader of the 1958 railroad movement; Luis Cervantes Cabeza de Vaca, one of the leaders of the 1968 student's movement; Rafael Aguilar Talamantes, member of the Communist Youth, and Valentín Campa, an old independent trade unionist and member of the Mexican Communist Party (Fernández, 1975: 84).

[21] Resolution of the XVI Congres of the PCM (1973) CEMOS, Fondo PC, Caja 80, Clave 76, Ex. 17, Foja 5

In 1973 the organization changed its name to the National Committee of Auscultation and Organization (CNAO) under the argument that a party that is not organized cannot be coordinated. A group headed by Rafael Talamantes pushed this change, but, shortly after the name transformation, it left the organization aiming to create a new political party, the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Workers Socialist Party, PST).

The members of the PST expected to create a "Marxist-Leninist party capable of attracting the majority of the workers and peasants". However, the veracity of its revolutionary rhetoric and actions was questioned in 1975 after their members decided to support the "democratic and liberal nationalist sector of the political bureaucracy", which they considered Echeverría represented (Fernández, 1975: 89).

In September 1974, some of the remaining members of the CNAO, led by Demetrio Vallejo and Heberto Castillo, founded the PMT (Fernández, 1975: 84). The PMT emerged in the heat of social mobilizations of the seventies, which they interpreted as the denial of the masses' consent to the "dominant bourgeoisie". In this context of social agitation, supporters of the PMT thought that it was essential to organize the masses to provide them with a concrete "alternative for their struggle". They meant to become an organic alternative to the country's crisis. Also, they aimed to reflect the tradition of radical nationalism "historically generated during the Cárdenas administration", which was based on the principles of national sovereignty and in the "participation of the masses in the political game".[22]

The concrete demands of this new party were, according to their members, "the demands of the 'national question' in Mexico: economic and political sovereignty, internal democratization and agrarian reform", which the Mexican Constitution included, but that had been neglected by the reigning bourgeoisie. Considering that situation, the PMT intended to become a national political party that would push against the "governmental repression" for the respect of the Constitution through the exercise of the "citizen's rights".[23]

The reformation of the political system and the reinforcement of the opposition

In this section of the chapter, I will address the characteristic of the student's movement of 1968, and I will explain why it was a breaking point in the relations

[22] "Partido de la Trabajadores, ¿Reforma o Revolución?", *Punto Crítico*, October, 1974, p. 29.
[23] "Partido de la Trabajadores, ¿Reforma o Revolución?", *Punto Crítico*, October, 1974, p. 29.

between the State and society. The core demands of the students were in favor of the democratization of the system, which was not something new; other mobilizations had had similar demands before. However, the student's movement was out of the control of the corporatist structure[24] of the PRI. This characteristic allowed the students to organize independently from the State, which the Echeverría administration interpreted as a sign of alarm for reforming the political system in order to put under institutional control all those social sectors that were out of the political system. The attempt to transform the system led to the so-called political reform, which consisted in the modification of some constitutional articles and in the publication of a new electoral law, which gave more rights to the opposition, as I will explain in this section.

Contesting the status quo

In the summer of 1968, the Mexican students rose against the authoritarian practices of the Mexican state, and, by doing so, they shook its foundations. It all began on July 22, 1968, as a conflict between students of rival high schools, which turned particularly violent due to the involvement of members of "[…] two neighboring gangs and government-sponsored provocateurs" (Pensado, 2013: 206), also known as *porros*[25], which was brutally ended by the riot-police (the *granaderos*).

The police's savage response led to a protest on July 26 that, once again, resulted in a clash between the riot police and students and *porros*. From this confrontation emerged the first fight committees, which kept on rebelling against the police, and that served as the foundation of the *Consejo Nacional de Huelga* (National Council of Strike, CNH). The CNH emerged on August 2nd, 1968, and enabled the organic unity of the movement, which allowed the elaboration of a joint list of demands. The CNH pressed for the freedom of all political prisoners; the removal of police chiefs; the dissolution of the Mexican riot police; the elimination of articles 145 and 145bis from the Federal Penal Code, which sanctioned the "crimes of social dissolution"; the compensation of the families of the dead and "those who fell victim to the constant aggression perpetrated since July 1968"; and the "demarcation of responsibility

[24] Since the administration of the Lazaro Cárdenas, when the PRI was the PRM, that structure mediated the relations between State and society and enabled the control of political plurality.

[25] According to Larissa Lomnitz, the porros emerged in the 1950s at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) from football cheerliding squads. Within time, those squad became government-sponsered provocateours that operated in the public univeresities to control the student's political activity (Lominitz, 2005: 85)

concerning the repressive excesses of the police, the *granaderos* and the army" (Draper, 2018: 24).

The mobilizations continued during the summer, but the administration of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz seemed unreceptive to their demands and was getting impatient because the inauguration of the 1968 Olympic Games was getting closer and the social unrest did not seem to be close to an end. Finally, the movement concluded in October, 2nd 1968, when shooting from the army towards the crowd ended a peaceful meeting in Tlatelolco.

At first sight, it may be puzzling to comprehend why a group of students that led a movement that only lasted a few months could challenge the Mexican political system. When the student's movement articulated around the CNH, they created a "[…] political interlocutor visible, independent, and anti-establishment" (Rodríguez-Kuri, 2003: 222), that had emerged spontaneously and that the government did not know how to deal with, because of the lack of the institutional channels to negotiate with it (Bizberg, 2002: 157). In part, this was because the movement was mainly composed and led by members of the middle class, in particular, its educated sector (Zermeño, 2018: 111), which did not have a defined place within the corporatist arrangement that supported the regime, a fact that allowed them to question its authoritarian practices through its demands and actions.

Regarding the movement's demands, the students were clamoring for elemental political and civil rights, like the "freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression of ideas, beliefs and cultural preference", demands that linked them with the other youth protest of 1968 around the world and their desire for freedom (Zermeño, 2018: 110). Although, in contrast with the movements in Western democracies, in Mexico, the students faced an authoritarian regime. As a consequence, their struggle was mainly for the political system's democratization. This demand implied eliminating the regime's authoritarian features and the State's accountability for its actions. The students were trying to build a new relationship with the State, a more horizontal one, in which the citizens had a say, and the government could be held responsible for its misconduct, which are fundamental principles for a substantive democracy.

As for their actions, the students challenged the status quo through the democratic practices within their organization (Moreno, 2018: 214), at least in the beginning, like the decision making in assemblies or their insistence on conducting the

negotiations with the government in the public arena, which contrasted with the authoritarian procedures of the Mexican state. It is significant to mention that, as the movement evolved, those democratic features of its origin were weakened, giving way to more vertical forms of interaction between the leaders and the bases of the movement (Zermeño, 2018: 110). Nonetheless, its early moments proved that it was possible to do politics in another way.

In conclusion, the students managed to challenge the authoritarianism of the Mexican state by organizing independently from it and by teaching a democratic lesson to the rest of society. With their actions and demands, they went against one of the pillars that held together the post-revolutionary regime: the control of civil society and its demands through the corporatist structure of the hegemonic party and mechanisms like co-optation and repression.

The political elite interpreted the student's movement as a challenge to the institutions that emerged from the Mexican Revolution and to its values, from which they considered the students had failed to acknowledge their capacity to adjust (Pensado, 2013: 214). Therefore, their response consisted of defending those institutions and values, which they deemed necessary to adapt, not transform, to the current circumstances. In concrete terms, this was translated in a controlled opening of the system to create the institutional channels through which the middle classes could express their demands (Bizberg, 2003: 156-157), without creating instability and damaging the legitimacy of the regime.

Political reform

The task of reformatting the system was left in the hands of Luis Echeverría and his administration, who according to Porfirio Muñoz Ledo[26], constantly told him during the

[26] **Porfirio Muñoz Ledo Lazo de la Vega** was secretary of labor (1972–1975) under Luis Echeverría. He became president of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in 1975–1976 and briefly served as secretary of education (1976–1977) before being fired by President José López Portillo. He later served as ambassador to the United Nations (1979–1985) under López Portillo and Miguel de la Madrid.
In 1986 he co-founded the Democratic Current in the PRI, serving as its national coordinator, before supporting Cárdenas's 1988 presidential campaign. In 1988 Muñoz Ledo co-founded the PRD, becoming president of the party in 1993, the only politician in modern times to preside over two of the three major parties. Currently, he is member of the Movement of National Regeneration (Morena), from which he is one of the founders.
Camp, Roderic Ai. "Muñóz Ledo Lazo de la Vega, Porfirio (1933–)." *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, edited by Jay Kinsbruner and Erick D. Langer, 2nd ed., vol. 4, Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008, pp. 734-735. *Gale eBooks*, https://link-gale-

presidential campaign that "[…] the institutions were not working well in the country", and that they had to be transformed (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 215). Echeverría wanted to implement a progressive government, capable of incorporating to the system all the "subversive" elements. He aimed to achieve this through a "[…] policy of democratic opening" that would change social patterns. Also, Echeverría wanted to apply "[…] a more advanced ideology of the government of Mexico", which would not only bring into the system the subversive elements but would also improve the Mexican-American relations by "creating a kind of *cordon sanitaire*, not repressive, against any subversive elements that could come" (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 218-219).

As was explained above, in economic terms that progressive attitude materialized in the shared development model, and in political terms, this translated in what came to be known as Echeverría's "democratic spirit", which consisted in "[…] the preach and practice of 'dialogue', 'criticism' and 'self-criticism'" (Cosío Villegas, 1976: 112). In the context of this democratic spirit, the government of Echeverría launched two law initiatives that aimed to reform the electoral system for reinforcing its representativeness and to increase "the political participation of citizens"[27]: the constitutional reforms of 1971 and the new electoral law of 1973.

1971 Constitutional Reform

Echeverría sent the bill in order to reform the articles 52, 54, 55, and 58 of the Mexican Constitution to the Chamber of Deputies in 1971. According to the objectives expressed in it, these reforms aimed to consolidate the country's democratic system through the creation of an institutional frame capable of organizing "[…] significant currents of opinion […]", and to "[…] allow their representation in the Legislative power […]", which would consolidate the country's "democratic stability and [open] up wide possibilities of expression of legitimate ideological dissent". In addition to providing the institutional channels to favor an "[…] adequate and efficient popular representation […]" and to facilitate the "[…] articulation of the interest of the minority" with the "[…]

com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/apps/doc/CX3078903834/GVRL?u=ed_itw&sid=GVRL&xid=fe42c672
Accessed 12 May 2020

[27] Luis Echeverría (1976) "Las reformas constitucionales (Iniciativa de Reformas y Adiciones a la Constitucion Politica de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos)" *La Reforma Politica del Presidente Echeverría*, Cultura y Ciencia Politica, p. 10.

aspirations of the majority […]", this new institutional frame also aimed to "[…] incorporate new generations to the exercise of public power […]".[28]

According to Echeverría, the integration of the dissident voices and underrepresented demographic groups was necessary for keeping the system's stability. This feature was deemed fundamental for the continuation of the country's economic expansion, which he wanted to base on social justice and the citizen's political participation.

The reform to article 52 increased the demographic composition of the electoral districts, and it was motivated by the demographic boom experienced by the country and sought to avoid a dramatic increment in the number of deputies and to provide a better organization of the citizens.[29] The reform to article 54 decreased the percentage of votes needed to obtain party deputies[30] and increased to 25 the maximum of that type of deputy that minority parties could obtain in each election[31]. Finally, reforms to articles 55 and 58 reduced the age to become a deputy and a senator. According to article 55, to be a deputy, the new minimum age was 21, and, according to article 58, 30 to be a senator.[32]

Table 1. Constitutional Reforms of 1971

Article	Reform
52	• Increase the demographic composition of the electoral districts. • Each district represented 250,000 or a fraction that exceeded 150,000 people. Before, each deputy was elected by 200,000 or a fraction that exceeded 100,000 people.
54	• Decrease the percentage of votes needed to get party deputies. It went from 2.5% to 1.5%. • Increased to 25 the maximum of party deputies that a minority party could have.

[28] Luis Echeverría (1976) "Las reformas constitucionales (Iniciativa de Reformas y Adiciones a la Constitucion Politica de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos)" *La Reforma Politica del Presidente Echeverría*, Cultura y Ciencia Politica, p. 10.

[29] Before the reform a deputy was selected by every 200, 000 people or a fraction that exceeded 100,000. After the reform a district was created to represent 250, 000 people or a fraction that exceeded 150, 000. This caused that for the federal elections of 1973 there were only 16 new districts, instead of the 63 that would have been without the reform (*La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 11)

[30] The deputies of party were a type of deputies of proportional representation, which were created in 1963 in order to augment the presence of the minority parties in the Chamber of Deputies (*Diario Oficial de la Federacion*, June 22, 1963).

[31] *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 12.

[32] *Ibid*., p. 12.

55	•	Lower the age to become a deputy from 25 to 21.
58	•	Decrease the age to become a senator from 35 to 30.

In general terms, these constitutional reforms can be interpreted as a complement to the reform carried out by Gustavo Díaz Ordaz in December 1969, by which the minimum age to vote was reduced from 21 years to 18 years[33], granting political rights to the youth. Likewise, these reforms aimed to adapt the system to the demographic conditions of the country. According to the 1970 census, the total population of Mexico was 48,225,238 people, from which 52.75% was under 18 years old.[34] These figures show that Mexico's population was young, and it was essential to provide channels of institutional participation for that growing sector.

Federal Electoral Law

The new Federal Electoral Law was published in 1973 as a substitution of the 1946 law. The former had been reformed many times but seemed unfit to respond to the present circumstances, in which political parties were slowly becoming fundamental intermediaries between the state and society. Just as happened with economic development, Echeverría also considered that the government and the citizens were co-responsible for guiding the political course of the country. To do so, Echeverría was aware of the importance of granting the institutional channels for political participation, and he also was aware that the country had changed and that the political cohesion based on the revolutionary unity was unsustainable, as it was expressed by Muñoz Ledo, who considered that:

> the unity of the revolutionary sector achieved automatically, or almost automatically, national unity. Then it [was] no longer like this: the revolutionary sector [could] be united, bureaucratized, subordinated, but that [was] no longer the key to national unity but rather the negotiation with the outside [of the revolutionary sector]. (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 259).

Taking this into account, in the bill the "[…] existence of a natural variety of ideological positions concerning the orientation of public affairs […]" was acknowledged. It was

[33] *Diario Oficial de la Federacion,* December 22, 1969, p. 2. https://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_to_imagen_fs.php?codnota=4650410&fecha=22/12/1969&cod_diario=200186

[34] *IX Censo General de Población* (1972) Secretaría de Industria y Comercio, Dirección General de Estadística, 1970.

stated that democracy was "[…] dialogue, confrontation of opinions for the integration of the nuclei that define the values and objectives of the community".[35] Also, it was stressed that the political parties were crucial elements in the integration of the political community because they were the organisms through which the "individual options" concentrated "[…] for participating in the collective decisions […]", and through which the confrontation of different positions was possible.[36]

With that objective in mind, this new electoral law modified some of the requirements to register a political party and granted to those registered some prerogatives that, in theory, leveled up the ground for electoral competition. For example, the law guaranteed the effective representation of all registered political parties in all electoral institutions, which were the Federal, Local, and District Electoral Commissions. This measure was taken to assure the "impartiality of the decision making organs", and also to enhance the principle of joint responsibility among the political parties in the supervision of the electoral process, where "it gestates and configures our democratic government".[37]

Also, to provide resources to spread their political programs and to establish contact with their partisans and citizens, the political parties were granted postal and telegraphic franchises, as well as access to national radio and television transmissions. According to article 39 of the law, political parties were given ten bi-weekly minutes in a national broadcast, in which all parties that had requested it could participate. The production of the program was going to be covered by the State through the Federal Electoral Commission. In addition to that, the access to media sought to generate a better-informed citizenship that would be more prone to participating in the political decision making through their engagement in the elections.[38]

In recognition of the new groups and new ideas generated by the changes in the social composition, and of the dangers of their lack of representation in the political system, the new electoral law reduced from 75,000 to 65,000 the number of members required to obtain the register as a national political party. This regulation aimed to

[35] *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 107.
[36] *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 107.
[37] *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 108.
[38] *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p 120.

stimulate the organization in political parties of those ideological tendencies that were not part of the political system, but that were relevant enough to be incorporated.[39]

Finally, seeking to enhance the transparency of the electoral process, the National Register of Voters was given more faculties for the updating of the electoral register. This measure responded to the demographic changes generated by the internal migration from the country to the city. Also, in the exposition of motives of the law initiative, the fact that the National Register of Voters was a dependency of the Federal Electoral Commission was reinforced, in which organism all registered parties were represented.[40]

As can be observed, this new electoral law aimed to respond to the social and demographic changes that occurred as a consequence of the modernization of the country. In particular, it was claimed that it sought to incorporate in the political system new ideological tendencies through political parties and to reinforce the role of those existing as intermediaries between the state and society. Further, in the law initiative and the innovations incorporated in this new electoral law, it was evident that the Echeverría administration considered the reform of the political system in particular, the electoral process, essential for change in order to stimulate the participation of the citizens in the elections.

However, in reality, the changes to the electoral legislation did not bring the deep transformations it promised. For example, the new legislation meant to enable the incorporation of divergent ideological tendencies to those already represented, but during this administration, no application for registration of any new political party was approved.

For example, let us review the case of the Mexican Democratic Party, which, according to Ignacio González Golláz, its president between 1975 to 1978, were

> "encouraged by the democratic opening announced by President Echeverría […] to make a supreme effort to build a national political party that would help reduce abstentionism and marginalization, which would lead the people to fight for the electoral route, within our Constitution, to take power and share it with the politically organized democratic forces in the country.[41]

The members of that party carried out base work across the country for almost three years, trying to fulfill the requirements of the Federal Electoral Law, and submitted his

[39] Article 23, "Federal Electoral Law", in *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 115.
[40] *La reforma política del presidente Echeverría*, México, Cultura y Ciencia Política, p. 110.
[41] *Gaceta Informativa de la Comisión Federal Electoral*, 9 de junio 1977. p.1

application for registration on June 29, 1975, which was denied by the authorities arguing "[…] membership failures" (Guillén, 1997: 170).

This event evidenced the limitations of Echeverría's democratic spirit, which only opened the door of the political system half-way, to engage in a dialogue with all those different ideological tendencies, but without really wanting to foment political plurality. Porfirio Muñoz Ledo reaffirms this impression. He claimed that Echeverría aimed to open the channels of the state to disagreement and popular demand, to reverse the sclerosis of the system, which had worsened due to the lack of dialogue, and to allow the mobility within the public sector by giving the chance to "young men to enter [its] high levels" (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 298).

However, according to Daniel Cosío Villegas[42], the Echeverría administration also failed in its attempts to foster a dialogue with society, mostly because it was more a monologue than a dialogue, in which the government was the only one that had the means to communicate. The other interlocutor, "the Nation", lacked channels of expression, such as public manifestations, political parties, the parliament, the elections, the press, books, television, cinema, or radio (Cosío Villegas, 1976: 113-114). All of those media and political institutions existed, but, they were tightly regulated by the government. This control limited its function as instruments of free expression and channels of communication between the state and its citizens.

The emptiness of Echeverría's democratic discourse, and its incapacity to deal with non-institutionalized opposition groups, manifested on several occasions. Notably, in the strategy used against the rural and urban guerrilla movements, known as the Dirty War (*Guerra Sucia*), by which "the government institutionalized arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and irregular trials as weapons of war, but they never legally sanctioned or formally declared a state of

[42] **Daniel Cosio Villegas** (*b.* 23 July 1898; *d.* 10 March 1976), Mexican intellectual figure and cultural entrepreneur. A graduate of the National Preparatory School and the National School of Law, he became a prominent student leader and began teaching before graduating with degrees in law and literature. He was a disciple of Pedro Henríquez Ureña and a political collaborator of José Vasconcelos. He became one of the first members of his generation to study economics abroad. In 1938 he founded *El Trimestre Económico* and the leading publishing house Fondo de Cultura Económica, directing both until 1948. Known for his collaborative historical projects on the Porfiriato, he directed *Historia Mexicana* (1951–1961) and cofounded and directed the Colegio de Mexico, where he produced many distinguished disciples. He was awarded the National Prize in Letters in 1971, and was a member of the National College from 1951 until his death. Camp, Roderic Ai. "Cosío Villegas, Daniel (1898–1976)." *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, edited by Jay Kinsbruner and Erick D. Langer, 2nd ed., vol. 2, Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008, pp. 623-624. *Gale eBooks*, https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/apps/doc/CX3078901722/GVRL?u=ed_itw&sid=GVRL&xid=e1e557ef. Accessed 12 May 2020.

siege" (Herrera & Cedillo, 2012: 7). The Dirty War officially concluded during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), leaving a balance of thousands of disappeared people, "more than forty armed revolutionary organizations […] virtually eliminated from the political scene", and a long list of human rights violations (Herrera & Cedillo, 2012: 6).

Likewise, the lack of substance of Echeverría's democratic spirit manifested in the control of the worker's uprising that took place during this administration, or in the repression of June 1971, known as the Corpus Christi massacre, when paramilitary forces dissolved a student protest in Mexico City, leaving 120 dead. These events and the systematic acts of repression, particularly against left-wing forces, showed that the administration of Echeverría was not willing to engage in a dialogue with its opponents to find a solution to the country's problems. In a way, this intransigent attitude also led to a confrontation with the business sector.

Despite the flaws and strong rhetoric charge of Echeverría's democratic spirit, Cosío Villegas considered that there were some positive elements to rescue. For example, the multiplication of "monologuists" within the public and private spheres. By the term “monologuists”, Cosío Villegas referred to political and economic actors that started voicing their opinions in the public arena induced by Echeverría’s call to express their positions. However, according to Cosío Villegas, those “monologuists” did not engaged in a dialogue, as was the case of the business sector, which started giving declarations to the press, when before they reserved them for their conventions. This invitation to dialogue led to an increment in the communication between the different federal powers, particularly between the Executive and the Legislative, through more frequent public hearings, in which the cabinet members addressed Congress concerning new legislation of their competence (Cosío, 1976: 121). In particular, that last aspect became relevant in the successive administrations, when more parties and opposition deputies integrated the Chamber of Deputies because it came to be the space in which they could challenge the Executive Power and its decisions.

Also, Cosío Villegas thought that another positive balance was the exposure of the president and public servants through the president's constant tours around the country and its presence in the media. According to him, that created the impression that the power was somehow accessible and responsive to the grievances of the people, which had helped relax the social tensions (Cosío, 1976: 121-122).

Finally, it seemed like the political reform met its objective of strengthening the political parties of the opposition in the system, particularly the PPS and the PARM, thereby avoiding the risk of its disappearance and keeping the façade of pluripartidism.

Table 2. Percentage of Votes Per Party for the Election of Federal Deputies (1964-1973)

	1964	*1967*	*1970*	*1973*
PAN	11.51%	12.29%	13.65%	14.70%
PRI	86.24%	83.35%	79.94%	69.64%
PPS	1.37%	2.76%	1.48%	3.61%
PARM	0.73%	1.41%	0.80%	1.81%

Source: Silvia Gómez Tagle (1990) *Las estadísticas electorales de la reforma política*, México, El Colegio de México.

As it can be observed in Table 2, both parties got 3.61% and 1.81% of the votes in the 1973 elections, which was more than the double of votes compared to the 1970 elections, when they got 1.48% and 0.80% respectively. However, the next presidential election proved that the strengthening of those parties was misleading, and the appearance of pluripartidism untenable, because there was only one presidential candidate supported by three of the four registered parties. These figures show steady growth in the PAN's votes between 1964 and 1973, and a constant decrease in the vote for the PRI.

Explaining patterns of electoral behavior is not the objective of this thesis, but these electoral figures serve to illustrate the erosion of the hegemony of the PRI in the electoral arena and the progress of the opposition, notably the PAN. In the following chapters, I will show how the PAN consolidated its position as the strongest opposition party in the system thanks to the integration of new political actors –the business sector- in the party, and its capacity to attract and articulate popular dissatisfaction towards the PRI. Also, in the following chapters, I will explain the left-wing parties' development and the consequences that an increment of the state's intervention in the economy had for the party system.

Chapter 4. The Development of the Opposition, New Articulating Social Formations and the Transformation of the Party System

This chapter will address the transformations brought by the electoral reform of 1977 and the development of the opposition parties. Its central argument is that the political and economic crisis pushed electoral reforms that enabled the realignment of the political forces within the system. In addition, I argue that readjustment was possible thanks to the acknowledgment of political plurality, the development of the opposition parties, and the emergence of new articulating social formations.

The first section is about the presidential elections of 1976, and the electoral changes carried out during the administration of José López Portillo (1976-1982). Those elections were unusual because there was only one presidential candidate, which deepened the legitimation crisis of the political system, and provoked more profound transformations in it.

The immediate consequence was the publication of the Federal Law of Political Organizations and Electoral Process, better known as the LOPPE, which is considered a breaking point in Mexican political history because it opened up the system for the opposition mainly in two ways. In the first place, it allowed the registration of new political parties that represented currents marginalized from the system, as in the case of the Mexican Communist Party (PCM). In the second place, it increased their presence in the national political arena through the plurinominal deputies by granting them the right to participate in local elections with their federal registration.

The second section addresses some of the changes brought by the new legislation. In concrete, it tackles the registration of new political parties and how this enabled the realignment of political identities and the re-articulation of social forces within the system because it allowed the emergence of the statist and anti-statist poles. Besides, the section describes how the plurinominal deputies increased the presence of the opposition in the legislative power.

Finally, the third section explains how the legislative activity enabled the development of the left and the *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, PAN) as opposition forces. In the case of the left, it permitted the congregation of different trends in a single organization, first the *Coalición de Izquierda* (Left Wing-Coalition), and second the *Partido Socialista Unificado de Mexico* (Mexican Socialist Unified

Party, PSUM). Regarding the PAN, the legislative activity after the political reform allowed the transformation of the party from a passive opposition to an active one. This change meant the PAN actively carried out actions to break the hegemony of the PRI, like challenging the individuals and rituals of the system that supported it.

The chapter draws on published documents, like the transcriptions of the public hearings for the LOPPE, and the debates in the Chamber of Deputies. Likewise, information was gathered from magazines like *La Nacion* and *Así Es*, which were the official diffusion channels of the PAN and the PSUM, respectively. Also, data were collected from magazines like *Punto Critico* and *Proceso*, where it was possible to find information about the left-wing organizations and parties, and interviews with its leaders.

A new electoral framework

Solo Campaign

The mid-term elections of 1973 created the illusion that Echeverría's political reform had been successful in restoring the façade of multi-party politics, and in giving a boost to the eroded political system. However, the presidential elections of 1976 evidenced its failure and the system's lack of political pluralism. For those elections, there were four registered parties: *Partido Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, PAN), *Partido Popular Socialista* (Socialist Popular Party, PPS), *Partido Auténtico dela Revolución Mexicana* (Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution, PARM), and *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI). However, there was only one candidate, José López Portillo, who was supported by the PRI, PPS, and PARM.

In the second chapter I explained that the PPS and the PARM had had the same candidate as the PRI since 1958. Therefore, it was not unusual that in 1976 those three parties nominated the same person. The atypical thing was that the PAN did not have a candidate, a situation that will be explained later in this chapter. The important thing, for now, is that the withdrawal of the PAN made undeniable the authoritarian features of the system and exposed the necessity to welcome into it new and independent political parties capable of fulfilling their role as intermediaries between the state and society. This impression was reinforced by the fact that the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) launched the candidacy of Valentín Campa. However, since it was an unregistered party, Campa's name did not appear in the

ballot, which means that there were other political options, but they were being neglected.

For the elite in power, the absence of the PAN candidate was the most significant event, because it aroused the fear of abstention and the consequent discredit of Mexican democracy, as was expressed by the Ministry of Interior, Mario Moya Palencia. After the so-called Extraordinary National Convection of the PAN he claimed that:

> "It would be harmful to democracy if they [the PAN] do not present a candidate, because that party has intervened in the electoral processes for many years, and it would favor the worst elements of abstentionism that have remained latent in a developing population like ours."[1]

Besides, he said that "the struggle of the parties, and the capacity to dissent, [were] essential for the proper exercise of democracy."[2]

In this context, the campaign acquired a particular relevance, because its primary objective was to fight abstentionism and persuade Mexicans to vote. This objective was made evident by the fact that "on walls and posters and in radio and television, the ruling party […] [urged] Mexicans to vote 'for democracy' before asking them to support Mr. López Portillo".[3] Also, the campaign served the purpose of making José López Portillo known to the public, because he was practically a stranger in the political scene.

During the campaign, López Portillo acknowledged the necessity to reform the country's structures, as Echeverría did six years previously. Nevertheless, in contrast with his predecessor, his discourse had a conciliatory tone and continuously called for national unity based on the principles of the Mexican Revolution, which he deemed essential to pull the country out of the economic crisis. According to him, the only way to achieve that was through the increase in production, which was only possible if the Mexicans worked together. However, López Portillo was aware of the differences between each sector of society, and expected that each give in its own capacity and be rewarded "according to their needs." [4]

The economic strategy that López Portillo launched to overcome the economic crisis was known as the *Alianza Popular para la Producción* (Popular Alliance for Production). It aimed to "raise the standard of living and to fight the price upsurges,

[1] *El Informador*, January 27, 1976.
[2] *El Informador*, January 27, 1976.
[3] *New York Times*, July 5, 1976.
[4] *Historia Documental del PRI. Tomo 10*, pp. 144.

inflation and unemployment" through the growth of production, which, according to him, was the "[…] only chance to channel satisfactory and solid solutions for the most acute problems of our economy". [5]

This new development strategy implied economic planning, in particular of the government's investments, which were going to be channeled to promote the production of consumer goods and to secure the economic independence of the country, which was conditional on its food and energy sufficiency.[6] It is relevant to mention that the production of luxury goods was not going to be banned. However, that production was going to be left "to the risks of the free market".[7]

Like the *Desarrollo Compartido* (Shared Development) strategy launched by Echeverría, the Popular Alliance for Production sought to generate economic development, but also to tackle the unequal distribution of wealth. In that sense, both strategies aimed to democratize, in theory, the economic growth of the country. Nevertheless, in contrast with the Shared Development, the Popular Alliance limited the state intervention to specific sectors of the economy. The restrictions to the state's role in the economy aimed to ease the relations between the business sector and the government in order to gain a broad base of social support for the economic project.

In addition to this, the Alliance for production also stressed co-responsibility between state and society in the decision-making process. Therefore, for López Portillo it was important for the good functioning of the representation mechanisms, because it was through them that the people could organize and express their will.[8] Despite the relevance that the subject of political representation had, during the presidential campaign, López Portillo did not openly address the issue. The topic was likely avoided in order not to highlight the anti-democratic character of its campaign, which resembled shadow boxing. To bring some legitimacy to his election, López Portillo stressed in his closing speech that people would vote for him because his proposals convinced them, not because he was the only candidate:

> "Members of my party, ladies and gentlemen: as the only candidate to the Presidency of the Republic, for almost ten months, I have been seeking the vote and support of the Mexicans".[9]

[5] *Historia Documental del PRI. Tomo 10*, pp. 190.
[6] *Historia Documental del PRI. Tomo 10*, pp. 202.
[7] *Historia Documental del PRI. Tomo 10*, pp. 191.
[8] *Historia Documental del PRI. Tomo 10*, pp. 202.
[9] *Historia Documental del PRI. Tomo 10*, pp. 184

The elections were celebrated on July 4th, 1976, and as anticipated, López Portillo won. The surprise was that the participation rate was higher than expected, even exceeding that of the previous presidential election. The figures went from 64.89% in 1970 to 68.69% in 1976 (Gómez Tagle, 1990: 19). A few days after his victory was ratified by the Electoral College[10], and he took office on December 1st, 1976.

Despite having overcome the electoral abstention, this electoral process exposed the authoritarian characteristics of the political system inside and outside the country. Evidence of this is the testimony left by Richard Gott, a correspondent for *The Guardian* in Latin America. Gott wrote that these elections made it clear that in Mexico, there was only one party, the PRI, and that once its candidate was chosen, only "an act of God" could prevent him from becoming Mexico's next president. Also, he thought that it was evident that "no one [had] the chance to dispute the title with López Portillo", and that the opposition could only "register a pianissimo note of discontent". All these characteristics of the system that ruled the country for more than 50 years made Mexico "one of the most sophisticated dictatorships in the world, yet […] so efficiently institutionalized that the names of the Presidents disappear rapidly into history".[11]

The exposure of the system was a threat to its continuity. It was necessary to include other political parties in the system to secure its survival. Further, it was essential to open institutional alternatives capable of channeling the social and political discontent that, from different fronts, aroused during the Echeverría administration. Taking all this into consideration, the López Portillo administration enacted in 1977 an electoral reform that would permanently transform Mexico's political landscape.

The 1977 Electoral Law

The 1976 elections were evidence that the "rigid relations between Mexicans and with the system were a danger"[12], and that some concessions were necessary to stabilize the country in those uncertain times. It was not the first time that the post-revolutionary

[10] The Electoral College was the body that validated the elections, and it was integrated by the recently elected members of the Chamber of Deputies. Once the electoral processes were validated, the Electoral College was dissolved.
[11] Richard Gott, "Predictable problems for Echeverría's successor", *The Guardian*, June 30, 1976
[12] "Viejo propósito de Reyes Heroles. Reforma Política: una apertura verdadera", *Proceso*, April 9, 1977.

regime faced a crisis that endangered its position. However, according to Francisco Paoli, by then a member of the PMT, in contrast with other occasions, this time, the challenge was framed by economic austerity. This difference meant that the state could not grant material incentives to neutralize the danger, and it had to negotiate with its political resources, which led to the acknowledgment of the independent political groups through legislative reform.[13]

Jesús Reyes Heroles, Minister of the Interior, announced the reform on April 1st, 1977, in Chilpancingo Guerrero, during the annual address of governor Rubén Figueroa. In his speech, Reyes Heroles acknowledged that:

> "[…] majorities and minorities constituted the national whole and [that] the respect between them, their peaceful coexistence within the law, [was] the solid foundation for the development of the empire of law and the possibilities of local progress".[14]

Considering Reyes Heroles words, the reform aimed for the political institutions to capture the country's ideological diversity through the expansion "of the possibilities of sectorial representation".[15]

It is interesting to observe that for Jesús Reyes Heroles, the existence of political diversity did not lead to chaos. On the contrary, for him, stability resided not in political homogeneity, but in recognition of plurality. This perspective was a significant breakthrough for the Mexican political system, and an essential transformation for the integration of opposition political parties, which were no longer viewed as enemies of the nation, but as crucial components of the system's good health.

However, it is relevant to mention that with the incorporation of the opposition in the political system, Reyes Heroles did not envision the end of the PRI's hegemony. Those parties would be admitted in a subordinated position; as a minority that had to comply with the "majority's will and [to renounce] violent means, disruptive of the law".[16]

The news was received with skepticism by some of the opposition parties, in particular, the PAN. In an editorial published at *La Nación*, the PAN's president, Manuel González Hinojosa, expressed that the possibility of reform was hard to

[13] Francisco José Paoli, "Reforma Política: respuesta a una necesidad", *Proceso*, April 9, 1977.
[14] *El Día*, April 02, 1977.
[15] *El Día*, April 02, 1977.
[16] *El Día*, April 02, 1977.

believe, since after "so many reforms and promises the system continu[ed] to be the same".[17]

Nonetheless, González Hinojosa did consider that this new reform had the potential of transforming the political system, as long as the new parties were independent of the PRI, and not its appendages, like the PPS and the PARM. If that condition was met the new political parties:

> "[…] could contribute to breaking the system, and National Action would have the opportunity to continue its struggle against it and face true political parties in less unfavorable conditions".

Otherwise, the PAN would continue "alone in its fight against the anti-democratic system".[18]

The PCM received the announcement of the political reform with a bit more enthusiasm, but also with some reservations. Although they welcomed the acknowledgment of all the "political currents and the cessation of the diverse forms of discrimination against those that did not take communion in the altar of the current regime"[19], they also considered that real political reform would entail deep transformations. Its president, Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, believed that it was also necessary to "give back the vote its real value", by changing from its roots "the procedures for the organization, realization, and validation of the elections". These transformations could only be possible if those tasks went "from the government's hands […] to those of an independent organ, capable of restoring confidence to citizens".[20] This point of view was shared by the PMT and the PAN[21] and would become one of the central and constant demands of the opposition in the long journey of Mexico's democratization.

The involvement of the opposition parties

In contrast with other occasions, this time, the government invited the opposition to express their points of view and proposals for the reform in a series of public hearings, which took place between April 28th and July 21st, 1977. The invitation to participate

[17] *La Nación*, April 20, 1977.
[18] *La Nación*, April 20, 1977.
[19] Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, "Reforma, no adecuación", *El Universal*, April 7th, 1977.
[20] Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, "Reforma, no adecuación", *El Universal*, April 7th, 1977.
[21] "Viejo propósito de Reyes Heroles. Reforma política: ¡por una apertura verdadera!, *Proceso*, April 9th, 1977.

was extended to all the registered parties, parties without registration, and other political groups. There were a total of twelve hearings attended by fifteen political organizations, twenty-six people on a personal basis, two trade unions, and the *Instituto Mexicano de Estudios Políticos* (Mexican Institute of Political Studies).

In general terms, during the hearings, the participants expressed the necessity of a profound transformation of the political system which, they considered, went beyond modifications to the electoral legislation. A common demand was the end of the mass affiliation of workers and peasants to the PRI, and their freedom to support and join any party they wanted. For example, Manuel González Hinojosa, president of the PAN, in his intervention, expressed that his party demanded:

> "[…] the absolute individual freedom of the workers and peasants to affiliate to the party they wanted and the suppression of all trade-union and political sanctions, pressures or retaliation for not affiliating to the official party".

The relevance of this demand rested in the fact that the corporatist structure was essential for the survival of the authoritarian regime because it granted it with "[…] a strong base of social support while imposing important restrictions to mass participation" (Middlebrook, 1995). Therefore, with the demand for freedom of affiliation, the opposition was seeking in-depth changes in the system, particularly in state-society relations. They were asking for the freedom of society to organize through political ties that were not mediated by the state.

In accordance with this, another constant demand during the hearings was the independence of the electoral processes and institutions. For the opposition, this meant less state interference and more citizen involvement, which was considered a necessary condition for democratization. Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, president of the PCM, clearly expressed this in his intervention when he noted that

> The more state intervention and control, less democracy, and vice versa, while independence […] and civil responsibility [increases in the] elections, the better and more democratic are the processes

Specifically, the PCM suggested that the national and local electoral institutions were integrated with representatives of all political parties and by some citizens of "[…] recognized honesty and independence, chosen by unanimity by all the parties". As was mentioned before, the other opposition parties shared this demand since they all considered that autonomous electoral institutions were fundamental for a real transformation of the political system.

Other frequent demands were the implementation of proportional representation systems at national and local levels, permanent access of all political parties to the mass media, and that national registered parties could automatically participate in local elections without further requirements, as can be read in the transcription of the debates of the Chamber of Deputies. In general terms, the opposition parties wanted to level-up the ground to guarantee a fair electoral competition. Nevertheless, by doing so, they were suggesting to bring down one of the primary mechanisms that permitted to maintain the hegemony of the PRI in the party system. Evidently, that party was not going to allow this and, in the political reform those elements that changed the system profoundly were not incorporated. Nevertheless, these hearings were not in vain. Some of the opposition's proposals were included in the final bill; for example, the public financing of the parties, the participation of all the registered parties in the organization of the elections through the Federal Electoral Commission, and their recognition as entities of public interest.

The changes brought by the new legislation

López Portillo sent the law initiative to the Chamber of Deputies on December 7th, 1977. The reform was debated in the Federal Congress during December between the members of the registered parties (PAN, PRI, PARM, and PPS), and, finally was approved and published by the end of the month under the name of Federal Law of Political Organizations and Electoral Process (LOPPE). The publication of this new law also implied the modification of 17 Constitutional articles, to adapt them to the new law.[22]

Among the most relevant changes introduced by the LOPPE are the recognition of the political parties as entities of public interest, which meant that they acquired rights that guaranteed their existence. For example, access to the media and public financing. In addition, through this constitutional rule, the parties were acknowledged as "necessary intermediaries in the democratic life" by granting them the exclusive faculty to nominate candidates (Becerra, 2000, 109).

Also, with this reform, the political parties were able to obtain a provisional registration. This addition to the law is relevant because the parties were able to nominate candidates without having a permanent registration, which was conditioned

[22] The Constitutional Articles that were modified were: 41, 51. 52, 53, 54. 55. 60, 61, 65, 70, 73, 74, 76, 93, 97 and 115.

to their results in the elections. To get the permanent one, the parties had to obtain at least 1.5% of total votes.[23]

Finally, this reform changed the composition of the Deputies Chamber. It increased its members to 400, from which 100 were selected under the principle of proportional representation. This measure sought to widen the presence of the opposition by assuring that at least 25% of the seats were for them (Woldenberg, 2012: 30). It is relevant to mention that if the minority parties got 90 deputies elected by the majority, the number of deputies of proportional representation would be reduced to 50 (Fernández, 1978).

In general terms, this political reform transformed the national political landscape by creating the conditions for introducing new actors into the system, which contributed to its stabilization. This characteristic can be considered as a positive aspect, but it also had the downside of neutralizing the non-registered political parties as external forces capable of pushing for more significant transformations of the system, like the disintegration of the corporatist structures. Nonetheless, the changes introduced by this law were the first institutional step to dismantling the system that supported the hegemony of the PRI.

The aftermath of the reform

The opposition and some members of the political elite welcomed with skepticism the final results of the 1977 reforms. On the one hand, certain sectors of the political elite saw in the LOPPE a threat to its interests. On the other, the opposition parties deemed it insufficient because the government and the PRI still kept control of the electoral processes, and the corporatist structure remained untouched.

Within the group in power, probably the *Confederación de Trabajadores de México* Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) was the most vocal faction against the reform because they saw their interests threatened by it. Fidel Velázquez, leader of the organization, expressed some of his concerns in the closing ceremony of the II National Reunion of Graduates of the Institute of Workers Education, which took place in January 1978. During the event, Velázquez alluded to an analysis of the political reform done by the CTM. In that document, the possible creation of the Party of the Proletariat was mentioned. This new party would aim to defend the interests of the

[23] Article 34, “Ley Federal de Organizaciones Politicas y Procesos Electorales”, *Diario Oficial de la Federacion*, December 30, 1977p.4

workers and preserve the unity of the labour movement.[24] Some political analysts interpreted this announcement as a threat to stop the implementation of the political reform in social organizations, such as trade unions, which would erode the foundations of its power by giving the workers the freedom to affiliate to whichever political party they wanted. [25]

Probably, for the opposition, that reaction was a bit exaggerated. Especially considering that the final result of the political reform did not meet the expectations of change it created. For example, the *panista* Juan José Hinojosa found that the LOPPE left untouched "the power of the majorities" and had reinforced "the ties between the government and the PRI." In addition to that, he argued that the political reform was not even an electoral reform because the elections were left in the government's hands[26]. That situation allowed them to secure the victories of the PRI, despite the lack of popular support.

The systemic electoral advantage of the PRI was exposed soon after the publication of the law during local elections. Probably the most representative case took place in Tamaulipas[27] where partisans and supporters of the PRI left that party to join the PARM to contend in the election of "43 town councils and 14 local deputies" in 1978.[28] The group of local *priistas* left the PRI to join the PARM as a protest for the imposition by the national leadership of unpopular candidates and the disregard of politicians locally rooted.

The former *priistas* had a good chance to beat the PRI candidates in the polls. The hegemonic party was not going to let that happen and it carried out a series of unlawful actions to secure the victory of its candidates. For example, they stole ballots, altered official results, or cancelled elections where nothing else worked.[29] The events in Tamaulipas proved that bad habits die hard and that more than one law was going to be necessary to transform the Mexican political system.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the changes introduced by the LOPPE were the foundations for more profound transformations in the political system. The introduction of new opposition parties in the system and the increase of their

[24] Francisco José Paoli, "¿Romperá la reforma política al PRI?", *Proceso,* January 23rd, 1978.
[25] Carlos Pereyra, "Firme rechazo a la reforma política", *Proceso*, February 6th, 1978.
[26] "La CTM debe fortalecerse si quiere hacer frente a la reforma política", *El Dia*, January 6th, 1978.
[27] Tamaulipas is a northern border state, with a coast line to the Gulf of Mexico.
[28] Carlos Pereyra, "Reiteración del engaño", *Proceso,* January 16th, 1978.
[29] Carlos Pereyra, "Reiteración del engaño", *Proceso,* January 16th, 1978.

presence through the deputies of proportional election were significant modifications that eventually realigned the balance of power within it. Nonetheless, the changes were not immediate and were the result of multiple factors, one of which was the development of the opposition parties as actors capable of disputing the power from the PRI.

Plurality and Political Realignment

New Political Parties

One of the most relevant changes brought by the 1977 reforms was the inclusion of new political parties in the system through the temporary registration. The Ministry of Interior granted this type of registration to the *Partido Comunista Mexicano* (Mexican Communist Party, PCM), the *Partido Demócrata de México* (Democratic Party of Mexico ,PDM) and the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Party of Workers, PST) on May 4th, 1978[30]. To obtain it, the new political parties had to prove that they fulfilled the following requirements:

> "A) That the applicant has had permanent political activity during the last four years.
> B) That its declaration of principles, a program of action and statutes […] comply with the requirements of articles 22 to 25[31] of the Federal Law of

[30] *El Informador*, 4 de mayo de 1978.

[31] **Article 22.-** All organization aiming to become a national political party has to formulate a declaration of principles and in consonance with them, its program of action and the statutes that will guide their activities.
Article 23.- The declaration of principles necessarily will have
I.- The obligation to observe the Political Constitution the Mexican United States and respect the laws and institutions that emerged from it.
II.- The ideological basis of political economic, and social character that it postulates.
III.- The obligation of not accepting any pact or agreement that links or subordinates them to any international organization or that makes dependent of entities or foreigner political parties.
IV.- The obligation to conduct their activities in a pacific and democratic way.
Article 24.- The program of action will establish:
I.- The measures that it intends to take in order to execute its principles, reach its objectives and the policies suggested to solve the national problems and
II. The means that it will adopt to in relation to its ends of ideological direction, political formation and electoral participation of its militants.
Article 25., The statues will stablish:
I.- Its own denomination which has to be different to other registered parties, as well as its emblem and colour or colours that characterize them and makes them different from other political parties; all of which has to be exempt from religious or racial references.
II.- The affiliation procedures and the rights and obligation of its members;
III.- The internal procedures for the renovations of its leadership and the form that their acts should follow for the nomination of its candidates, which can be public.
IV. The functions, obligations and faculties of its organs that at least should be:
1.- A national assembly;
2.- A national committee or an equivalent organism that has the representation of the entire party in the country;

> Political Organizations and Electoral Processes, demonstrating that those documents were approved.
> C) That the applicant represents a current of opinion that expresses the ideology that characterizes any of the social forces that exist in the country […]
> D) Given the public functions that the political parties play within society, the interested [applicants] have the viability conditions of political action in the national sphere."[32]

The welcoming of these new parties, particularly the PCM, was relevant because it meant the acknowledgment of plurality, which enabled the realignment of political identities and the re-articulation of social forces within the system. The axis that defined those identities was the scope of the state's intervention, resulting in the consolidation of statist and anti-statist positions.

The pair statism/ antistatism was not new in Mexico's political system, but the economic transformations brought by the crisis placed it in the center of the political arena. The importance it acquired in the definition of the political identities began to be evident since the 1979 midterm elections, in which the newly registered parties participated for the first time, together with the PAN, PRI, PPS, and PARM.

The PCM, PPS and PST were aligned in the staitist pole, whereas PDM and PAN where aligned with the opposite. The PRI and the PARM were placed in the middle, this means that they favored the state's control over some economic and social affairs, but its postures were not as radical as the PCM, PPS, and the PST. The differences between the parties were evident in their programs for the 1979 elections. The contrast was particularly notable in the economic section, in which each party advocated for more or less intervention from the state, as can be observed in the programs of the PCM, PRI, and PAN. These parties, or their derivatives, were the key actors in the consolidation of Mexico's multiparty system; therefore, they will be the focus of the rest of the research.

In the 1979 elections, the PCM formed a coalition with other left-wing parties and organizations, which was named the Left-Wing Coalition and will be addressed in more detail later in the chapter. For now, the important thing is their economic program for the midterm elections. In it, the Coalition advocated for a system of price control,

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3.- A committee or organism equivalent in each, at least of half of the federal entities o in half of the electoral districts in which the country is divided, been able to integrate regional committees that gather many federal entities.
V. The sanctions applicable to the members that infringe its internal regulation.
Diario Oficial de la Federación, December 30, 1977.

[32] *Diario Oficial de la Federación,* March 13, 1978, p. 17.

and for the planning of the economy to yield “the private capitals and public companies to the interests of the nation” (Bodek, 1982: 38). In addition, they campaigned on behalf of the “nationalization of the monopolies, so the state acquired the property of the big vital industries”, like the food, pharmaceutical, cement, construction, and steel industries (Bodek, 1982: 38).

The PRI aimed for more vigorous participation of the government in the production and distribution of consumer goods, refused the use of oil revenues for the payment of the external debt, and resisted “foreign penetration”.[33] However, beyond that, there were no other measures that expanded the scope of the state in the economy. The PRI advocated for the implementation of a mixed economy, in which “parallel and complementary structures” of the private, state and social sectors would coexist, each preserving their autonomy to make their own decisions, but “always responding to the superior interest of the country” (Aziz, 1989: 216)

In contrast with this, the PAN opposed a far-reaching interventionist state, not only in the economy but also in politics and other aspects of social life, like education or family planning. The PAN considered that the state had to keep out of areas that “had nothing to do with [its] duties”, and limit its role to the promotion and guidance of the country’s economic development. [34]

It can be observed that the statist pole was related to nationalist positions, because the expansion of the state in the economy meant the defense of the nation’s interest against local, but mostly, international capital. The connection between both strengthened as the dependency of the Mexican economy grew, and the opening of the national market was inevitable. In contrast, the anti-statist position associated with the internationalization of Mexico’s economy, particularly during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), when new priorities in economic policy accompanied the re-composition of the political elite.

In the next chapter I will explain how that transformation was, in part, a consequence of the economic decisions taken during the administration of López Portillo, particularly the nationalization of the banking sector. However, in that presidential term, the pairs statist-nationalist and anti-statist-internationalist were not consolidated. This can be attributed to the fact that the economy was not the priority

[33] “Planteamientos para un programa de acción moderno”, *Historia Documental del PRI*
[34] “Programa básico de acción política”, *La Nación*, marzo de 1979, pp. 14-16.

of the opposition parties, which were more concerned in securing and expanding their recently acquired political rights, as can be inferred from their participation in the Chamber of Deputies.

The Legislative Body of 1979

One of the firsts steps for the development of the opposition parties as capable entities to dispute the power from the PRI was the inclusion of new parties in the Congress and the increment in the number of seats granted to them through a system of proportional representation (plurinominal deputies). The first time this kind of deputies were elected was in 1979, for the 51st Legislative body, which was integrated by 300 deputies of relative majority, and 100 plurinominal deputies, through which the minority opposition parties were mostly represented. As expected, the PRI got the majority of votes (69.71%), which translated into 296 seats in Congress. The PAN won the four remaining seats, and the rest of the parties only got plurinominal deputies.

The law established that the election of plurinominal parties varied each time. This meant that the Federal Electoral Commission agreed in every electoral process on the terms of the distribution of those deputies. They had to decide things like the number and composition of the electoral districts or the amount of the deputies by district. For the 1979 elections, the Commission agreed that there were going to be three plurinominal districts.

The first one was integrated by the states of Baja California, Baja California Sur, Colima, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, Sinaloa, and Sonora, and was given 30 deputies. The administrative center of this district was the city of Guadalajara, which meant that the Local Electoral Commission of Jalisco state was going to be responsible for counting the votes on that district.[35]

The second district was formed by Coahuila, Chihuahua, Durango, Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon, Queretaro San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas, Veracruz and Zacatecas, and the number of deputies assigned to it was 30. The administrative center for this second district was Monterrey, and the Local Electoral Commission of the state of Nuevo Leon was in charge of counting the votes.

Finally, the third district was integrated by the states of Campeche, Chiapas, Mexico City, Mexico, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, and Yucatan. The authority responsible for counting the votes of this district was the Local

[35] *Diario Oficial de la Federacion*, January 29, 1979. p. 25.

Electoral Commission of Mexico City, which meant that Mexico City was its administrative head. This district was given 40 deputies.[36]

All the registered parties got more than 1.5% of the total votes, which made them eligible for seats in the plurinominal districts, except for the PRI, which got more than 60 seats in the elections by majority[37]. The political party that got the highest number of plurinominal deputies was the PAN (39), in second place was the Left-Wing Coalition (18), in third place the PARM (12), in fourth place the PPS (11) and in fifth place were the PDM (10) and PST (10).

Plurinominal deputies distributed by district and political party (1979-1982)

Party/District	PAN	PPS	PARM	PDM	PCM	PST
I	12	3	3	4	5	3
II	12	3	6	1	4	3
III	15	5	3	5	9	4
Total	39	11	12	10	18	10

Source: ***Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*****, August 29, 1979.**
http://cronica.diputados.gob.mx/DDebates/51/1er/Ord/19790829.html

It is pertinent to note that, in general, the plurinominal deputies were relevant figures within their parties. This fact is significant because it shows that the opposition was aware that their chances to win seats by majority were slim, and did not want to risk the defeat of their leading figures. For example, the Left Wing Coalition nominated prominent figures within the left like Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, Valentín Campa – presidential candidate for the 1976 elections, Othón Salazár, Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, Gascón Mercado or Ramón Danzós Palomino.

The opposition was skeptical about the transparency of the electoral process because they considered that the government and the PRI still controlled the elections. Their doubts were proven right in the validation of votes when strict enforcement of

[36] *Diario Oficial de la Federacion*, January 29, 1979. p. 25.
[37] According to article XX of the LOPPE if a political party won more than 60 seats by majority, they could not get plurinominal deputies.

the law favored the PRI in cases that the election of their candidates was challenged. For them, this was proof that the system was unfair and faulty of origin, just as it was expressed in different ways by the representatives of the PAN, PCM, PDM, and PST when it was their turn to provide a closing statement at the end of the validation of the elections. For example, Abel Vicencio Tovar from the PAN said:

> "I have to say that in principle, the process is flawed of origin. Judge and jury, the federal government; the electoral register completely disarticulated and inefficient; more than an instrument for the elections, a trap to catch null votes or to prevent authentic ones." [38]

In agreement with this, the leader of the PCM, Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo considered that "[…] the political reform had preserved an electoral system that was basically undemocratic […]", and therefore:

> "It [was] necessary that the democratic forces […] of the country, act[ed] with persistence to form and consolidate an electoral system authentically democratic, meaning, that it [would] rest on the political parties and that the government would not have the capacity to intervene to decide […]"[39]

In consequence, during the 51st legislative period, the minority parties presented many bills to modify different articles of the LOPPE and constitutional articles related to the elections. With those modifications, the parties aimed to correct the vices of the system and move forward towards its democratization. A common demand was the necessity to include their representatives in all electoral authorities and to extend the figure of plurinominal elections to other federal and local powers. For example, Hiram Escudero Álvarez from the PAN suggested on August 23, 1980, the reformation of the 56th constitutional article, which would allow the election of some senators by the principle of proportional distribution.[40]

Workers' rights were another topic that concerned the minority parties during the 51st legislative period. For example, Gumercindo Magana Negrete from the PDM asked for the abolition of the clause of exclusion from the collective contracts. His party considered that this clause affected the political freedom of the workers because it prevented them from joining any union they wanted and put them at risk of being expelled from a trade union for political reasons.[41]

[38] *Diario de los debates de la Camara de Diputados*, August 29, 1979.
[39] *Diario de los debates de la Camara de Diputados*, August 29, 1979.
[40] *Diario de los debates de la Camara de Diputados*, August 23, 1980.
[41] *Diario de los debates de la Camara de Diputados*, October 30, 1979

It is worth mentioning that during this legislative period, the minority political parties presented approximately 84 bills, most of which were not even sent to the respective commission to be studied and discussed. The parties were allowed to talk, but they were not heard. Despite that, this legislative period was not a complete waste for those political parties, as it provided them with the space to develop their strength as opposition, particularly in the case of the left-wing socialist parties and the PAN.

Strengthening and Development of the Opposition Parties

Towards the unification of the left

In the case of some left-wing parties, this legislative period was significant because it paved the way for the creation of the *Partido Socialista Unificado de México* (Mexican Socialist Unified Party, PSUM) in 1981, which was a first attempt to unify the socialist forces in a single party. The immediate precedent of that organization was the *Coalición de Izquierda* (Left Wing Coalition), which included the *Partido Comunista Mexico* (Mexican Communist Party, PCM), the *Partido Socialista Revolucionario* (Socialist Revolutionary Party, PSR), the *Partido del Pueblo Mexicano* (Party of the Mexican People, PPM), and the *Movimiento de Acción Socialista* (Movement of Action and Socialist Unity, MAUS). The Coalition's objectives were contending in the 1979 elections and working as a parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies.

The collaboration in the Chamber of Deputies showed them the possibility to overcome their differences and build an alliance based on their points of agreement. Nonetheless, the PPM and the PSR, unregistered parties of the coalition, sought registration for the 1982 election, which leads to the supposition that the alliance was not meant to last. However, according to the Federal Electoral Commission, those parties did not meet the requirement for obtaining a temporary registration, and their applications were unsuccessful.[42]

In addition to the PPM and PSR, other left parties, the Mexican Workers Party (PMT), the Revolutionary Party of the Workers (PRT), and the Social Democrat Party (PSD), applied for temporary registration. From those parties, the PMT was the only one that did not get it. This outcome drove its leader, Heberto Castillo, to call for the unification of the left in a single organization (Rojas, 2008: 69). In the end, the PMT did not follow through[43], and only the members that integrated the Left Wing Coalition,

[42] *Diario Oficial de la Federacion*, June 12 1981.
[43] *Proceso,* March 5, 1979. It iss relevant to notice the absence of the PMT from the coalition, even though they were invited, their members decided not join as they refused to participate in the elections because they considered that the conditions were not democratic enough. Another party that did not

plus the Movement of Popular Action (MAP)[44], formed the PSUM. [45] The unification was agreed during the National Unification Assembly of November 5 and 6, 1981.

Some critics of the PSUM claimed that it was a homecoming of the PCM because it gathered organizations that split from it at some point. That observation was not incorrect, but the new party was more than that. The PSUM also held "[…] groups that never belonged to Communist Party […]", like the MAP or the "[…] *lombardista* movement that joined […] via the PPM[46] directed by Alejandro Gascón Mercado".[47] The diversity of different left-wing currents within the PSUM was its main strength. Still, it was also its most significant weakness because they never overcame their doctrinal differences, which created an integration based on pragmatism rather than ideology.

The PSUM participated in the 1982 elections with Arnoldo Martínez Verdugo, former leader of the PCM, as its presidential candidate. Their primary focus during the campaign was the economic crisis related to the drop in oil prices and Mexico's external debt. Considering this context, most of the party's proposals were related to the economy. For example, they demanded a general increase in wages, exchange controls, and the nationalization of monopolies in food and the banking system.[48] The party got 3.48% of votes for the presidential elections, 4.40% for the elections of deputies, and had 17 plurinominal deputies for the 1982-1985 legislative period, one less than they got in the 1979 election.[49]

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join the coalition was the Trotskyist Revolutionary Party of the Workers (PRT), because, according to the PCM leader, Arnoldo Martinez Verdugo, they reduced the left-wing perspective to "purely worker's action", and had not understood the necessity to collaborate with the peasants, the petit bourgeoisie and other sectors. Enrique Semo, "Arnoldo Martinez Verdugo del PCM (2), No a la abstención, ni al boicot, ni a la guerrilla", *Proceso*, March 19, 1979.

[44] The Movement of Popular Action (MAP) was nationalist left intellectuals, which claimed the vitality of the Mexican Revolution and accused the PRI and the government of killing it. Some of its members were Rolando Cordera and Arnaldo Cordova. Christopher Dominguez Michael, "Quién es quién en la izquierda mexicana", *Nexos*, July 1st, 1982. https://www.nexos.com.mx/?p=4067

[45]. Christopher Dominguez Michael, "Quien es quien en la izquerda mexicana", *Nexos*, July 1st, 1982 https://www.nexos.com.mx/?p=4067

[46] The PPM emerged in 1976 from a split of the Popular Socialist Party (PPS), as consequence of a conflict between the national leadership of the party and its local leadership in the state of Nayarit. The cause of the quarrel was the electoral fraud against Alejandro Gascon Mercado, who was the party's candidate for the governorship of the state in 1975. The national leadership of the PPS, headed by Jorge Cruickshank, negotiated the acknowledgement of the triumph of the PRI candidate in exchange for a seat in the Senate. (Rodriguez, 1997: 232-233)

[47] Interview to Jorge Alcocer Villanueva by Carlos B. Gil in *Hope and Frustration. Interviews with Leaders of Mexico's Political Opposition*, Delaware, Scholary Resources Inc p.229

[48] "Suplemento"*, Asi Es*, N 8, p. 2.

[49] *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, August 31st, 1982.

The PSUM continued its legislative activities and participated in the 1985 midterm election when they got 3.23% of the votes and 12 plurinominal parties.[50]The participation of the PMT, which got its temporary registration in 1984 (Rodríguez, 2002: 46), can partially explain the decrease in votes obtained by the PSUM because its presence fragmented the votes for the left. However, it also enabled a formal alliance between both parties and the PRT because, as Heberto Castillo, leader of the PMT, said:

> "[They] learned that [their] organization in practical matters, runs parallel in Congress with the party that calls itself Marxist, the PSUM, and with the Trotskyist party, the PRT".

Therefore, it made sense to join forces to strengthen the position of the left-wing parties. The project of unification consolidated in 1987 with the formation of the *Partido Mexicano Socialista* (Mexican Socialist Party, PMS), which will be addressed in the following chapter.

In contrast with the Left-Wing Coalition, the PSUM was thought of as a long term unitary project that aimed to assemble left-wing forces that pursued the implementation of socialism in Mexico. However, it faced different obstacles that hindered its consolidation as a national left-wing force. Probably the most significant impediments were its lack of internal cohesion and its incapacity to root in society. However, external obstacles, such as the competition with other left-wing parties, has to be considered as well.

Conflict and Renovation of the PAN

As mentioned before, the National Action Party (PAN) did not have a presidential candidate for the 1976 elections, due to an internal conflict. The origin of the dispute can be traced to the late 1950s when two factions within the party consolidated. On the one hand, there was a group that considered that the party had to establish a dialogue with the government, as they were part of the political system. On the other hand, were those who considered the party as an independent organization that was capable of surviving without considering the government and the elite in power (Loaeza, 1999: 265).

In 1975 the first current was headed by José Ángel Conchello, a businessman from Monterrey who presided over the PAN from 1972 to 1973. During his time leading

[50] *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, August 31st, 1985

the party, he aimed to secure the support of the middle classes and to capitalize on the distrust of the business sector towards the Echeverría administration (Loaeza, 1999: 305). Conchello advocated for a policy of open doors that welcomed into the party those that opposed the regime, without consideration of their religious affiliation.

In contrast with this, the second trend, the so called doctrinaires, was more attached to the principles of the party, like, for example, its Catholic roots. Considering this, they thought that membership should only be open to the individuals that shared the foundational values of the organization. This faction was represented by Efrain González Morfín, who was the party's president in 1975, and that was trying to bring it closer to the left-wing positions of some members of the Catholic church. (Loaeza, 1999: 307).

The tensions between the factions came to its highest point in December 1975, during the selection of the party's candidate for the 1976 presidential elections. The current represented by Conchello postulated Pablo Emilio Madero, whereas the *efrainistas* nominated Salvador Rosas Magallón. The PAN statutes established that the candidate was selected in the Ordinary National Convention and had to get 80% of the votes to be chosen. After three rounds, neither of the candidates met that requirement, and the Convention agreed to select the presidential candidate in the National Extraordinary Convention on January 25, 1976.

The story repeated in the Extraordinary Convention when, after seven rounds, none got the 80% required. Although the preference for Madero systematically increased, reaching 72.9% in the last voting. Despite having no chance of winning, the *efrainistas* did not yield and gave their votes to Madero, which meant that the party could not have a presidential candidate for the 1976 elections. The lack of consensus within the party reflected the changes in its composition, which became more heterogeneous in consequence of the open doors policy implemented by Conchello during his administration (Loaeza, 1999: 311).

The internal dispute settled with the selection of Abel Vicencio Tovar as president of the party. Vicencio called for the reconciliation of the party and to make use of the advantages granted by the 1977 electoral reform. This stance was criticized by the doctrinaires and led to the resignation of prominent *panistas* like Efraín González Morfín or Mauricio Gómez Morín, who accused Conchello of having "corrupted the party with the money of the Monterrey Group" (Loaeza, 1999: 323).

The PAN's depuration meant the consolidation of the faction that encouraged participation and political protest, which was evident in the 51st legislative period when the party went from a passive opposition to a proactive one. In concrete terms, that meant that the party's protests were more than words and were materialized in contentious action, which contributed to its development as an opposition force.

The two events that best illustrate this point are the intervention of Edmundo Garza Villarreal during López Portillo's 5th address to the nation in 1981 and the protest held by the PAN's parliamentary group in January 1982. Both actions were motivated by the electoral frauds perpetrated in local elections, and it is fair to say that they were unprecedented acts of protest.

According to *La Nación*, on September 1st, 1981, Edmundo Garza, a PAN deputy and candidate for governor of Coahuila state, asked the president of the Chamber of Deputies to speak after José López Portillo praised the democratic environment that surrounded the elections during the reporting period. By doing this, Edmundo Garza altered the structure of an act of great symbolic importance within the Mexican political system.

The address to the nation was not an accountability act, but a ritual that renewed the power and the adhesion to the president (López, 2006: 55). It was the moment when the president extolled the accomplishments of his administration and defined the direction that would govern the country for the next year of his government. In this ritual, the members of the Congress were there to listen, not to question.

Considering this, Edmundo Garza was not allowed to raise his concerns about the lack of transparency in the elections and other authoritarian practices in the system and was accused of exhibitionism. He was aware that he had disrupted the ritual, but he also knew that he had not broken any laws, and argued that he was only exercising his right of expression, just as he declared on the next day during a press conference:

> "I have not broken any rules. I am exercising a freedom of expression that has not been practiced before; I am precisely applying article 105 of the [Congress] code, which says that it is not possible to interrupt the speaker, but that in special circumstances, for example when someone wants to make a motion of order, respond to an allusion or make a clarification, the deputy can ask the president of the Chamber to ask the authorization of the speaker to be called into question."[51]

[51] *La Nacion*, September 16, 1981, p. 12.

Another PAN deputy, Juan de Dios Castro, declared in Garza's defense that "for years the president had exceeded his [constitutional] obligations […]"[52], by giving a speech when he was only required by article 69 of the Constitution to present a written report. So, if someone was breaking the rules, it was not them.

The other contentious episode carried out by the PAN's parliamentary group was the demonstration outside Palacio Nacional, the seat of the Federal Executive power, on December 17th, 1981. According to the feature published in *La Nación*, this protest aimed to condemn "[…] the constant electoral frauds of the government and its party", but in particular, they were complaining against the "shameless [electoral] robberies perpetrated by the government in Yucatan, Coahuila, Mexico State, and Hidalgo".[53]

Abel Vicencio explained that they wanted to set forth to the public's opinion that "the will of the people does not count". They were not interested in holding talks with the president, because as he said, "he [was] not the arbitrator in every election", and also they thought that they had done enough talking "where, when and with whom they considered they had to talk". [54] However, given the impossibility to solve the conflict through institutional channels, the PAN's parliamentary group decided to perform a "public and pacific act of protest against all those violations to the democratic system". This protest did not go further than this demonstration; nonetheless, it was significant.

With their actions, the *panistas* were diminishing the president's authority by disregarding his role as the supreme mediator within the political system. From their point of view, that was an attribution of the institutions. The problem was that those institutions were faulty, which is why they were not considering the government anymore as a valid interlocutor. Instead, they were appealing to the public for the acknowledgment of their actions.

The contentious actions of the PAN contributed giving back to the Chamber of Deputies its role as a counterweight in the political system, therefore changing the balance of power within it. They accomplished that by not observing its rituals and belittling the presidential authority, which was one of the system's pillars. The erosion of the presidential figure progressed during López Portillo's term. The nationalization of the bank system in 1982 aggravated this decline. That presidential decision had a

[52] *La Nacion*, September 16, 1981, p. 13.
[53] *La Nacion,* January 6, 1982, p. 10.
[54] *La Nacion,* January 6, 1982, p. 10

significant impact on the political system in general, and in the party system in particular. Its consequences will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter conclusion

The electoral reform of 1977 opened up the system for the opposition to contain the political and economic crisis that was affecting Mexico. The new legislation welcomed new parties in the system and granted more rights to the registered parties, but it kept under the government's control the electoral process, which allowed the PRI to maintain its dominance within the party system. However, those changes planted the seeds for the transformation of the hegemonic party system to a multiparty system.

The acknowledgment of political plurality permitted the emergence of projects that competed with the one championed by the hegemonic party and enabled the political re-articulation within the system. During the administrations of Luis Echeverría and López Portillo the poles around which the political forces rearranged in response to their political economy interests began to emerge. As a solution to the economic crisis of the country, both presidents increased the state's intervention in the economy. This response to the crisis gave place to the emergence of an anti-statist project, which was embraced by a faction of the business sector and some members of the political elite.

The anti-statist project began to articulate around the PAN through the incorporation of the disaffected businessman. However, it also found its expression in the PRI during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), when a new generation of politicians took over the party. The changes in the PRI did not mean the disappearance of the statist project since the left-wing parties embraced it.

Even though the re-articulation of the political forces within the system was motivated by economic changes, it would not have been possible without the development of the opposition parties. The electoral reform of 1977 was crucial for this process because it allowed its strengthening, notably the PAN and the left-wing parties. In the first case, the new electoral regulations enabled the transformation of the PAN to a protest party, which allowed the consolidation of the anti-staitist position of the business sector. In the second case, the opening of the system gave incentives to the different left-wing parties to overcome their differences and join forces for the articulation of the statist faction.

Chapter 5. The Rise of the Multi-Party System

The main argument of this chapter is that during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), the hegemonic party system was transformed into a multiparty system. I maintain that this was possible due to the consolidation of the following factors. In the first place, the consolidation of the PAN as an electoral force capable of obtaining electoral triumphs and securing its victories. Secondly, the arrival of the neoliberal faction to the leadership and the split of the Democratic Current. Finally, the unification of the socialist and nationalist independent left in the PSUM.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first one explains the strengthening of the PAN as an opposition party, which I attribute to its capacity for articulating civil discontent, the use of innovative electoral tactics, and the leadership of the businessmen and their resources. The second section is about the neoliberals in the PRI and the split of the Democratic Current. Finally, the last section is about the creation of the PMS in 1987.

To write this chapter I used published interviews with key actors, the political memoires of Miguel de la Madrid, the political platforms of the parties, and information from *La Nación*, the PAN's official magazine, and from *Uno más Uno*, which was a newspaper that mostly covered national political news.

National Action into Action

The development of the PAN as an active opposition continued and consolidated during the 1980s when it proved its capacity to win elections, defend its triumphs, and built a base of social support. This growth happened mainly in areas "with economic dynamism and foreign orientation", where "the businessmen felt less committed to the government" (Alba, 2006: 130). In those places, the capacity of the PAN to articulate civil discontent met with innovative political tactics and the leadership and resources of some businessmen.

Also, during the early 1980s, the PAN's anti-statist posture evolved as a consequence of the nationalization of the banking system. It went from a broad anti-interventionist posture to a concrete opposition that focused on the mismanagement of the economy and the corruption and authoritarianism associated with it. The development of the party's stance was instrumental in establishing an alliance with the business sector and attracting civil discontent because it made the PAN's opposition relatable. Their questioning of the economic mismanagement and complaint against

corruption and authoritarianism resonated among the population and the business sector, which made the party an alternative for airing their grievances.

In general terms, civil discontent grew as a consequence of the economic crisis and the government's incapacity to control it. This phenomenon especially sprouted in the northern border states where the devaluation of the peso significantly affected the local economies. Together with the population's unrest, the distrust of the business sector in regards to the government's management of the economy grew, particularly after the nationalization of the banking system in September 1982. Some members of the business sector considered that action an "attack on public freedom" that had to be denounced to avoid that "the expansive tendency of the State would asphyxiate society" (Bañuelos, 2002: 43).

However, not all the factions of that sector were vocal against the government. Some of them feared that López Portillo would carry out further expropriations, and preferred to wait and negotiate with the next administration, headed by Miguel de la Madrid (Bañuelos, 2002: 43). This lack of cohesion revealed the limits of the business organizations to coordinate the opposition against the government, and drove some of its members to seek other alternatives. In this last group was Manuel Clouthier, who presided over the *Consejo Coordinador Empresarial* (Coordinating Council of Businessman, CCE) from 1981 until 1983, when he joined the PAN (Camp, 2011).

Clouthier realized that "the possibilities of promoting the changes that the country needed" through the business organizations had been exhausted (Bañuelos, 2002: 49). Therefore, he sought to continue his political activity by participating in a party and so joined the PAN because of his affinity with its principles, particularly its Catholic social doctrine. Clouthier was socialized in those principles through his participation in the Christian Family Movement, where "he found an order to his social concerns and gave meaning to his struggle" (Bañuelos, 2002: 34). Besides, he also decided to become a *panista* after the party's electoral success in the early 1980s, when it won relevant municipalities in Chihuahua and Durango (Bañuelos, 2002: 49), which made it a viable political option.

As was mentioned earlier, the party's electoral success resulted from the combination of various factors, the most important being the articulation of civil discontent, new political tactics, and the involvement of the business sector. The synergy between those elements and its importance for the PAN's development became evident after the presidential elections of 1982. Particularly in the city of

Monterrey, where a group of citizens held a hunger strike to protest against electoral fraud.

In contrast with other occasions, this time, the allegations of fraud were supported on a survey published by *El Norte*, a local newspaper. A few days before the elections, this newspaper installed polls in different parts of the city to know the political preferences of the citizens. According to their results, the PAN would defeat the PRI in the local and presidential elections in Monterrey.[1] However, the official results contradicted it. In response to that, around fourteen PAN supporters expressed their discontent through a hunger strike. The demonstration lasted a week and was carried out in Plaza Zaragoza, a public square in the city center.

Needless to say that the strike did not change the results. But it was significant for other reasons. To begin with, it showed the increasing importance that the press acquired in the blossoming of a public opinion that contested the official version, which served as a basis for fueling the discontent against the system. It is relevant to mention that the public opinion that the press helped to shape was not neutral, and sometimes was linked to opposing interests to the government. In the concrete case of *El Norte*, this newspaper was the unofficial mouthpiece of the business sector in Monterrey (Smith, et. al., 2008), a group that, since the Echeverría administration, was in dispute with the government (Rousseau, 2010: 277).

Also, the hunger strike revealed how the PAN articulated the civil opposition of different sectors against the PRI and the government. The protest was carried out by people of different backgrounds, from a housewife of 67 years to a 16-year-old teenager[2]. The thing that they had in common was their dissatisfaction against the PRI and their demand for clean elections.

Finally, it is interesting to observe how the involvement of the business sector helped the PAN gain support from the population with an indirect intervention because they were not openly favoring the PAN, but it nevertheless helped shape the population's perspective around the elections and the contenders. On the one hand, the discrepancy between the survey and the official results nurtured the image of the government as a corrupt entity that disrespected the citizen's will. On the other hand,

[1] "Halcón que da en robar votos, aunque le quemen el pico", *La Nación,* July 28, 1982.
[2] *El Norte*, July 11, 1982, Section B, p. 1.

it contributed to articulate civil opposition around the PAN by framing it as the champion of civil and political rights.

The role of *El Norte* in shaping those identities was evident during the coverage of the 1982 presidential and local elections when it reported the irregularities in the process and praised the vigilant attitude of the citizens and *panistas.* For example, they denounced that polling booth number 93 had closed earlier because they ran out of ballots, and that when PRI representatives tried to calm the people demanding to vote, they were welcomed by shouts of "Fraud, fraud!". Since they were unable to control the situation, they asked for the assistance of the army, whose presence was enough to end things.[3]

In contrast with that, *El Norte* also published a brief photo report that showed how Maria Elena Saucedo Flores, representative of the PAN, was preventing electoral fraud. According to the report, Maria Elena discovered ballots with votes in favor of the PRI before the polling booth was open. After the discovery, she gave some of the ballots to the people queuing to vote. Also, she secured some inside her clothes to prevent the "policemen and *porros* from taking her false votes".[4]

With the coverage of the elections, *El Norte* expressed a dichotomy in which, on one side, were the citizens and *panistas* defending the transparency of elections, and on the other side the fraudulent PRI and government, which would do anything to win the elections. At the bottom of the *panistas* plea for clean elections were the demands against the government's intervention in the electoral processes and their aim to restore the election's legitimacy. This anti-interventionist stance was characteristic of the party and extended beyond the electoral arena. In general, the PAN defended the individual freedom of people and opposed the State's attempts to regulate it.

For example, during the presidential campaign of 1982, Pablo Emilio Madero, the PAN's candidate, expressed that, in case of being elected, he would reform the 3rd constitutional article. This article refers to education and has been controversial since its publication in 1917 due to the authority it gave to the State to regulate it and its anticlerical tone (Barba, 2019: 298). Considering that, the *panistas* aimed to reform it

[3] *El Norte*, July 5, 1982, Section B, p. 2.
[4] *El Norte*, July 5, 1982, Section B, p. 1.

to “[…] give the parents the freedom to choose the education of their children through parents associations”.[5]

The anti-interventionist stance consolidated into an open anti-statist posture after the nationalization of the banking system. The difference between one and the other is that the second one particularly rejects the state’s interference in the economy and advocates for free markets. Also, the PAN’s antistatism included a moral condemnation against government corruption and its authoritarian practices, which enabled the connection with their pro-democratic struggle. This means that for the PAN, the economic crisis resulted from economic mismanagement and the government’s authoritarianism and corruption.

Abel Vicencio, the party’s president, expressed that point of view in the press release on the occasion of the nationalization of the banking system. Vicencio argued that the flight of dollars, considered a justification for the nationalization, had been a consequence of a “[…] wrong project of growth with inflation defended by the president […] and the growing corruption”.[6] Also, he considered that the presidential decision did not have popular support, which could be proven by the fact that the parties that had included it in their political programs had low rating votes. Therefore, the nationalization of the bank had been another triumph of the president’s” ‘casting vote’ over the popular vote”.[7]

To sum up, the consolidation of the party’s anti-statist stance enabled the alliance with the disaffected businessmen and permitted to attract civil discontent. Also, I stated that that association, together with the protests carried out by the PAN supporters, permitted its strengthening as an opposition capable of disputing the power from the PRI.

Taking Power with the people in Chihuahua

The case of Chihuahua is a great example for understanding how the factors mentioned above interacted and consolidated the PAN as an opposition party. First of all, in the early 1980s in Chihuahua, there was “an extensive social convergence of middle-class groups, entrepreneurs, the Catholic hierarchy, and peasant and labor organizations pitted against Mexico’s long-ruling ‘official’ party [...]” (Aziz, 2001: 189),

[5] “El gobierno conserva el poder, pero ha perdido la autoridad”, *La Nación*, June 30, 1982.
[6] *La Nación,* September 22, 1982.
[7] *La Nación*, September 22, 1982.

and the PAN channeled it into a civil opposition that boosted its power as a local (and national) political force.

Furthermore, the party attracted members of the business community into its ranks. Probably the most relevant one was Francisco Barrio Terrazas, who joined the PAN in 1983. Before doing that, Terrazas was a distinguished member of the local business community that between 1981 and 1983 was the president of the Businessmen Center of Ciudad Juarez. He got involved in the organization of the party's municipal campaign for Ciudad Juarez in 1982, but at the beginning, he was not planning to be the candidate, although the members of the PAN invited him to be (Fuentes, 2016: 31).

Barrio Terrazas was reluctant to be the party's candidate, given the high personal cost that it would entail. However, according to an interview by Arturo Fuentes Velez, he decided to become the PAN candidate because the person who had agreed to be it was not up to the standard of the campaign he –and others- were organizing (Fuentes, 2016: 32). Finally, forced by the circumstances and driven by his "Christian commitment," he agreed to represent the PAN in the elections.

An anecdote that is relevant to mention is that, once he decided to run for the municipality, Barrio Terrazas shared the news with his older brother, who administrated the business of Jaime Bermudez. According to Barrio Terrazas, when he was at his brother's office telling him his decision, Bermudez came in and was also informed. In contrast with his older brother, Bermudez was supportive of the decision and advised "helping Francisco" by giving him money (Fuentes, 2016: 35). The importance of that endorsement it is that Jaime Bermudez was the godfather of Mexican manufacturing.

Before officially becoming the PAN's candidate, Barrio Terrazas was nominated by the Civic Front for the Citizen's Participation. However, this Front was a strategy designed to ensure popular support to his candidacy before being nominated by the PAN. According to Barrio Terrazas in the early 1980s, the middle class was willing to support the PAN, but they were still afraid of doing it publicly because of the high personal security risk it entailed in terms of beatings or imprisonment. But, if his candidacy came from a civic organization, not an opposition party, people were more likely to join. The strategy worked like a "textbook move" since they managed to get the support of thousands of people. The grassroots of the Civic Front came from parish

groups, whose members were tired of that “rotten, manipulative and corrupt regime” (Fuentes, 2016: 37).

This innovative strategy to gain popular support was not the only one applied during the campaigns in the state. Another novel resource was the use of advertising strategies that attracted the attention of the people. For example, they used car pennants with a catchy slogan, which were assembled and distributed by the PAN supporters (Del Pilar, 1986: 19). In addition to advertising the party, this type of resources helped create cohesion among the people that opposed the PRI and wanted a change because they showed them that they were not alone, that others also shared their discomfort.

The combination of all the factors mentioned above proved to be effective. In 1983 the PAN took control of key municipalities of the state (Aziz, 2001: 189), including Chihuahua, the capital city, and Ciudad Juarez, and won 9 of the 14 seats in congress. After these elections, the party’s presence grew in the state together with the popularity of its municipal presidents, particularly Barrio Terrazas. The local government and the PRI were aware of this situation, and, in December 1985, the local congress passed an electoral bill aimed to hinder its progress. The reforms to the local electoral law limited the number of party representatives in the polling places and forced them to comply with the requirement of having a six-month residency in the municipality in which they were going to be representing their party.

In response to those modifications, the *panistas* carried out a series of protest actions, like the hunger strike of the mayors of Ciudad Juárez, Parral, and Chihuahua or the call to perform acts of civil disobedience like not paying taxes and public utilities –such as water and electricity. Also, the legislative group of the PAN in the Chamber of Deputies left the session of December 21, 1985, to protest in the Zócalo –the main square in Mexico City- and on December 22 around 500 members of the party blocked the Santa Fe bridge on the border with the United States. Finally, on January 29, 1986, members of the PAN and its supporters walked, for almost a month, from Chihuahua to Queretaro in the *Caravana por la Democracia* (the Convoy for Democracy).

In the context of that tense environment, the PAN launched the candidacy of Javier Barrio Terrazas for the gubernatorial election of 1986. Barrio Terrazas was aware that his chances of winning were slim. Therefore, the main goal of his campaign was that:

> for the first time in history, the regime [would pay] an exorbitant bill. They [had] to pay such a brutal cost that the next time there [was] an election for governor, they [would] be scared and think twice before venturing into the next fraud (Fuentes, 2016: 50)

Just as predicted, the PRI candidate, Fernando Baeza was declared the winner of the election. However, the popular mobilization and favor achieved by Barrio Terrazas during the campaign raised the suspicion of fraud, which led to protests and the challenging of the results. In contrast with past occasions, this time, the PAN was not alone. It also had the support of diverse sectors of society, like the local Catholic church, some members of the business sector, and even well-known intellectuals. This last group manifested their endorsement through a press release in which they called the authorities to "[…] re-establish the harmony and declare null the elections in Chihuahua." According to the signatories, among which were Octavio Paz, Elena Poniatowska, and Carlos Monsivais, the authorities should not ignore the widespread discontent and prove to the people that their vote was worth something and that it had more sense than abstention or violence.[8]

The citizens and opposition parties shared the mistrust in the institutions expressed in the intellectual's appeal. The systematic fraud had eroded confidence in them, and it was necessary to restore it. The PAN considered that the only way to achieve that was by creating a system that "guaranteed suffrage effectiveness", the foundation of authentic representation and valid constitutional institutions.[9] The PAN's skepticism towards the Mexican institutions was reflected in the fact that it sought the assistance of international actors, like the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights, to intervene in Chihuahua and Durango's electoral conflicts. According to Jesus Gonzalez Schmal, a PAN deputy, this action aimed to prove that the Mexican people "[…] was not meekly subdued to a dictatorship", and that "it was attentive and active to rescue its democratic rights".[10] Besides, by filing a demand in the Inter-American Commission, the *panistas* aimed to question the Mexican government in the court of international opinion.

In the end, the electoral fraud could not be proved, and Fernando Baeza was governor of the state of Chihuahua for the 1986-1992 term. However, this experience

[8] "El Caso Chihuahua", *La Nación*, September 1st, 1986, p. 3.
[9] "Carta abierta al presidente de la república", *La Nación,* October 1st, 1986, p. 18.
[10] "No es ajena a México la CIDH: González Schmal", *La Nación,* October 15, 1986, p. 14.

evidenced that things had changed and it also allowed the PAN to weigh up its strength. Likewise, the campaign and the popular mobilization in its aftermath raised the cost of electoral fraud, just as Barrio Terrazas had anticipated. Henceforth, the authorities could not keep on securing the PRI's triumphs at any cost and had to start acknowledging the opposition's triumphs.

The disruptive potential of the PAN and its followers worried president Miguel de la Madrid to the point that he considered "the desirability of recognizing small triumphs to satisfy the middle and upper-class sectors that supported [the PAN]" in order to keep the system's stability (Collado, 2011: 169). During his administration, the victories of the PAN at a municipal level began to be acknowledged. But, it was not until the next presidential term when the *panista* Ernesto Ruffo Appel became the first opposition governor in the state of Baja California.

The executive power's concerns over the advancement of the PAN were reflected in the new electoral law of 1987, which replaced the 1977 LOPPE. The Federal Electoral Code of 1987 created the institutional mechanisms to guarantee the majority of the PRI in the Chamber of Deputies. The justification of this reform was the importance of preserving governance in the system. For this purpose, the new law introduced the "governance clause", according to which

> "if no party obtained 51 percent of the valid national vote and none reaches half plus one of the members of the Chamber [even with their plurinominal deputies], the party with the most [votes] was assigned deputies of proportional representation, until the absolute majority of the Chamber was reached" (Sirvent, 2002: 74)

Other changes were the cancelation of the conditional registry for the parties, the increment of the number of deputies –from 300 to 500- and the access of the majority party to the plurinominal deputies. Also, it implemented the renovation of the Senate every three years, instead of every six, created the Electoral Contentions Court, and the Assembly of representatives of the Federal District (Sirvent, 2002:74-78).

In contrast with previous reforms, this time, the changes introduced aimed to ensure the PRI's hegemony and closed the system for the progress of the opposition. Nevertheless, it also implemented institutional changes that were crucial for the country's democratization, like the Electoral Court and the Assembly of the Federal District. The tension between the contention of the opposition, particularly the PAN, and the creation of institutions that would enable them to advance and secure their

positions is the result of the opposition's strengthening as a political force, capable of contesting the government and the PRI. This fact, along with a defiant attitude, was evidenced in the discussion in the Chamber of Deputies of the law initiative sent by the president, which suffered relevant modifications. For example, the original document suggested that only the three strongest parties in electoral terms would have voice and vote in the Federal Electoral Commission (CFE). By contrast, the opposition parties demanded that all the parties were represented in the CFE based on the percentage of votes obtained in the elections (García, 2011: 81). At the end, this disposition benefited the PRI, because it was still the party that obtained the majority of votes. However, its relevant to note the opposition's defiant attitude, which contrasted with its previous one that rarely pushed for modifications to the law initiatives presented by the Executive power. This new electoral reform regulated the presidential process of 1988, and, as I will explain later, it was insufficient to contain the progress of the opposition, and to give back to the elections the legitimacy they had lost.

Trouble in Paradise

This section will explain the PRI's split of 1988, which was a consequence of the consolidation of a neoliberal faction and the displacement of the nationalist group within the party. I argue that the main factor that led to the split was the active marginalization of the nationalist faction by the neoliberals headed by Miguel de la Madrid. Also, I state that the exclusion of the nationalist faction resulted not only from policy differences but also from the neoliberals' political inexperience.

The policy differences concerned the scope of the State intervention in the economy. The neoliberals advocated for minimal intervention, whereas the nationalist faction wanted to keep the State as the main economic actor. Regarding political inexperience, it enabled the split in the party because the neoliberal's intransigent attitude towards the internal opposition led them to close the spaces in which they could have expressed their discontent and negotiate with them.

Finally, it is relevant to mention that the neoliberal political elite, particularly de la Madrid, failed to acknowledge that the systems' mechanisms of political and social control were associated with the State's capacity to give something in return. De la Madrid's political and economic project implied profound structural changes that harmed the living conditions of the majority of the population, which was expected to comply without getting anything in exchange. Eventually, this situation created

discontent in the population and the PRI's grassroots, who supported the priistas that raised their voice against de la Madrid's administration.

A New Group in Power

Now let us look at the origins of this split. During the administration of Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) began the rise of a political group that took control of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Miguel de la Madrid's presidential term (1982-1988). This process was reflected at first in the public administration, and it entailed the displacement of the party's traditional politicians by "abler actors in management tasks" and was motivated by a transformation in the "importance of the national problems" (Rousseau, 2000: 139).

Until the early 1970s, these two groups coexisted in harmony because they dealt with different aspects of the public administration. The first group managed political issues, like controlling political opposition, whereas the members of the second group were in charge of the economic growth of the country. The confrontation started when, in the context of the economic debacle, the economic problems became political issues, and their priorities stopped matching, which resulted in opposing solutions to the crisis. The traditional politicians aimed to keep the country's social and political stability despite the economic cost. In contrast, the emerging group, later associated with neoliberalism, wanted the reorganization of public finances and the control of inflation despite the social cost, and considered politics the cause of the nation's problems (Hernández, 2016: 110).

The tensions between the two groups escalated in the administration of José López Portillo when the battles within the Economic Cabinet were constant. In this conflict, the traditional politicians held a structuralist economic stance, whereas the emerging group was associated with a monetarist position. The structuralists advocated for the stimulation of production and reorganization of "[…] consumption and distribution through state action" (Centeno, 1997: 103). In contrast, the monetarists "[…] were more concerned with monetary controls and […] opposed increased public participation in the economy" (Centeno, 1997: 103).

In the course of López Portillo's term, the monetarists advanced their position within the public administration by taking control of the Economic Cabinet through the Ministry of Programming and Budget (SPP) and the Ministry of Treasury. Their position in those political spaces might lead one to think that they put in practice the economic policies they defended. However, the oil-boom experienced during this administration

permitted the expansion of the state's role in the economy, and the improvement of the government's social safety net (Centeno, 1997: 104), of which the monetarist theoretically disapproved, but did little to stop.

The administration of López Portillo concluded in an absolute economic debacle, for which he was held responsible. This crisis served as evidence that the economy should not be in the hands of politicians who "sacrifice rationality to short-term interests, [like] getting social support, avoiding criticism [and] conflict, and win elections", but in the hands of experts (Hernández, 2016: 117). The doubts about the traditional politicians' capacity to make the right decisions turned Miguel de la Madrid, the minister of Programming and Budgeting, into the perfect presidential candidate for his finance expertise (Hernández, 2016: 17). According to López Portillo, de la Madrid had been involved in the national financial sector since Ruiz Cortines' administration (1952-1958), which gave him the credentials to face a world in which "development financing was a basic problem" (Castañeda, 2015: 104). However, he lacked the necessary political skills, as he demonstrated during his administration.

The nomination and triumph of Miguel de la Madrid meant the consolidation of new leadership in the government and the PRI associated with neoliberal positions. In the party, the arrival of Adolfo Lugo Verduzco as its president in December 1982 marked the change of direction, because he enabled the introduction of "technocratic elements to the party for carrying out planning tasks" (de la Madrid, 316), and he also had the mission of preventing "access of traditional politicians to popularly elected positions" (Hernández, 2016: 122)

The emerging leadership of the PRI, like its predecessors, was forged "[…] in the public administration and it barely had contact with the electoral and partisan circles", but, in contrast with them, their careers developed in the public financial sector (Hernández, 2016: 113). Also, the members of this clique were distinguished by their political inexperience, which had severe consequences for the PRI. In particular, the abandonment of its revolutionary principles and the decline of the party's capacity to select candidates and face elections (Hernández, 2016: 119).

The consolidation of the changes in the party took place during the12th National Assembly when its leadership introduced changes to its declaration of principles. Those modifications aimed to tune in the party with the ideological stance of the group in power. According to Miguel de la Madrid, those changes transformed the definition of the institution from a worker's party to a party for all Mexicans (de la Madrid, 316),

which diluted the identification of the party with its corporatist bases and relaxed its social commitments. It is relevant to mention that de la Madrid and his followers could not carry out all the changes they expected due to the internal resistance they encountered, as expressed by de la Madrid in his memoirs:

> "An attempt was made to eliminate references to the party requesting the nationalization of the pharmaceutical and food industries, as it is a fact that I will not carry them out. However, Don Fidel's advisers, Romo and his henchmen balked, refusing to lower banners that have brought them new clients".

This aversion to the new spin brought by Miguel de la Madrid and his team to the party and the public administration was not a novelty. During his presidential term, the confrontation between de la Madrid's group and the more traditional sectors of the party was constant, and, little by little, it wore out the internal cohesion of the party. The continuous clash was the result of divergent political and economic positions, but it was mainly a consequence of the political incompetence of de la Madrid and his team.

Once they arrived in power, they created a tight and homogenous cluster, which closed the political space for those who disagreed with them. Miguel de la Madrid's political stubbornness eventually gave place to frustration among the displaced and ignored party members who demanded a place within the party and the public administration.

The general population also shared that exasperation, because de la Madrid's regime seemed to be deaf to the problems they faced due to pressing economic conditions.

For the de la Madrid administration, social development stopped being a priority, and "the pursuit of efficiency, rather than redistribution, became the focus of government policies" (Centeno, 1997: 117). The social conflict brought by the implementation of his policies was, for him, unavoidable, a price worth paying to keep the country's s finances straight.

To illustrate this point, in the first year of his administration, the members of the Agricultural Cabinet debated the warranty prices. The agriculture secretary considered that, in order to favor production and employment in the countryside, the first thing was to fix prices and then "accommodate the other economic prices". Although it was a reasonable solution, it was not viable because it would finally lead to breaking "[…] the limits of the deficit that we have set for ourselves and inflation would end up

annihilating any beneficial effect that such prices would have sought". (De la Madrid: 98). De la Madrid was aware that his solutions were unpopular and created discomfort, but that did not keep him from making decisions. Although the distress was extended, it was necessary "to act, [he had] to try to solve the problems. [He could not] let inertia or fear rule" (De la Madrid: 99).

The combination of the regime's lack of interest in the country's social problems and the displacement of the PRI's traditional membership created the perfect environment for the emergence of an internal opposition group, that eventually led to the breaking of the party. Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, an experienced *priísta*, and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, headed this group, which at the beginning aimed to reform the PRI from within and restore its core revolutionary values. However, they faced the resistance of the party's new leadership, which eventually expelled them from the party. This group came to be known as the *Corriente Democrática* (Democratic Current), and it is going to be the subject of the next subsection.

The Waves of the Democratic Current

According to Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, the idea of forming the Democratic Current (CD) came from Rodolfo González Guevara, who at that time was Mexico's ambassador in Spain (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 744). González Guevara shared Muñoz Ledo's concerns about the course the PRI was taking and considered they had to do something to correct it. Inspired by the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Worker's Party, PSOE), González Guevara suggested the creation of a group within the PRI that would express their judgments against the party's leadership but without breaking with it (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 745)

In an interview with James Wilkie & Monzón, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo talks about his democratic ideals, which strengthened in his time as Mexico's ambassador to the United Nations (1979-1985), his desire to shake things within the PRI. However, his intentions to push a reformist movement within it might have had something to do with the fact that, after returning to Mexico, there was not a "position worthy of [him]" in de la Madrid's administration (Wilkie & Monzón, 2017: 743).

Whatever his motivations were, other party members shared his ideas and frustrations, which enabled the emergence of the Democratic Current in 1986. The timing of its arrival was not random; it coincided with the start of the presidential

succession process of 1988 because its members wanted to influence the selection of the next nominee and prevent the continuity of de la Madrid's regime (Bruhn,1993: 90). Nevertheless, the unwritten rules of the system, like the metaconstitutional presidential attributions, and the power acquired by de la Madrid and his team during his presidential term were obstacles that the Democratic Current could not overcome.

In general terms, this faction opposed the political economy carried out by the administration of Miguel de la Madrid, and aimed to "[…] rescue the historical dignity of the party […] and to re-establish its social-leadership function". [11] Under the pretext of making the state efficient and fighting corruption, there had emerged "[…] a new conception of politics that destroyed politics it-self, as the practice of social commitments and relations". [12] In concrete terms, this new way of doing politics translated to the fact that the party had become a bureaucratic entity that had lost contact with its base of social support, and was using its structure to implement economic measures that affected the living conditions of the Mexican population.

The original intention of the CD was not to abandon the PRI but to rectify its path. The high ranks of the party did not agree with them and considered their existence a destabilizing element that menaced the unity of the party and, therefore, they had to neutralize it. Besides, their intentions to influence the selection of the next presidential candidate were against the unwritten rule that gave that power to the president, which constituted an essential element for the system's stability. Since the presidential term of Lazaro Cárdenas, the political elite considered that the president's faculty to choose his successor prevented intra-elite conflicts and allowed them to keep the unity of the Revolutionary Family.

Even though the CD emerged in 1986, the conflict broke out as late as March 1987 in the framework of the 13th National Assembly. Porfirio Muñoz Ledo demanded the participation of the Current members in the panel discussions of the assembly, to which Jorge de la Vega Domínguez, the party's president, agreed. Their complaints and suggestions were heard, but they were not incorporated in the final documents of the event. Instead, de la Vega, in his closing speech, reminded them of the importance of party discipline and made it clear that "[…] in the PRI, neither the fifth column nor the Trojan horses will have a place".[13] Additionally, he declared that "those who [did]

[11] "La Corriente Democrática explica su origen", *Proceso*, July 11, 1987.
[12] "La Corriente Democrática explica su origen", *Proceso*, July 11, 1987.
[13] *Uno más uno*, March 5, 1987.

not want to respect the will of the vast majority of the PRI could resign from [the] party and seek affiliation with other political organizations".[14] Finally, de la Vega stressed that:

> "Those who consider that democracy requires the reduction of powers to the federal Executive, ignore that this is an institution product of our historical experience, and a powerful instrument of our collective will."[15]

In response to that, Muñoz Ledo, showing off his political skills, simply said that he and the Democratic Current were not going to leave the party and that de la Vega's speech was not meant for them, but for those that are against the Mexican Revolution because the members of the CD had "always adjusted [their] actions to the doctrinal principles of the organization".[16] However, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, another member of the current did not hold back and openly manifested his disagreement with the party's leadership and declared that de la Vega's speech announced a period of anti-democratic authoritarianism for the party and that unwritten rules should not be used to violate the "fundamental democratic rights of the *priistas*".[17]

Cárdenas' declarations started a commotion, and old-timers of the PRI, like Fidel Velázquez, demanded his expulsion from the party.[18] The fact that Fidel Velázquez, the leader of the Confederation of Mexican workers CTM, did not support the Democratic Current and stood by Miguel de la Madrid, is a bit puzzling, because one of the president's objectives was to bring down those bygone leaders in making the public administration more efficient. However, Velázquez, and other experienced politicians like him, knew that, if they wanted to keep their power, they had to comply with the president's will.

The leadership of the PRI did not expel Cárdenas or any other member from the party, doing that would have reinforced the PRI's anti-democratic image, and strengthened the Current. Nevertheless, the tensions between both sides prolonged for months, during which the rebel priistas continued their attempts to democratize the selection of the next presidential candidate until October 1987, when Carlos Salinas was selected as presidential candidate for the 1988 elections. Carlos Salinas was de la Madrid's Minister of Programming and Budgeting, and de la Madrid chose him

[14] *Uno más uno*, March 5, 1987.
[15] *Uno más uno*, March 5, 1987.
[16] *Uno más uno*, March 5, 1987.
[17] *Uno más uno*, March 9, 1987.
[18] *Uno más uno*, March 10, 1987.

because he considered that Salinas, in addition to his personal qualities, was going to continue his economic policy, which gave him a high "degree of consensus of the real forces of power inside and outside the party" (Castañeda, 2015: 221).

The *destape*[19] of Carlos Salinas de Gortari meant the continuity of de la Madrid's policies and the defeat of the Democratic Current. In this regard, Muñoz Ledo declared that with the appointment of Salinas the regime pretended to carry out a

> "reelection in disguise to perpetrate a group of anti-revolutionaries in power; the internal unity of the PRI has been broken, the majority have been affected, and the relevant [corporatist] organizations had been humiliated; since their opinions were not taken into account and they fell back into the imposition that in a short time could be affected by the rejection of the majority".[20]

The break from the PRI materialized when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas accepted to be the candidate of the *Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana* (Party of the Authentic Mexican Revolution, PARM) on October 12, 1987. The next day the *Partido Popular Socialista* (Popular Socialist Party, PPS) and the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Party of the Workers, PST) joined the candidacy. The fact that those three parties, particularly the PARM and the PPS, welcomed Cárdenas after his split is significant. Those three parties functioned as subordinated parties to the PRI and gathered political groups that orbited around it. The PARM and the PPS were, in a way, the result of previous splits from the PRI. In the case of the PPS, it gathered the group of the socialist Vicente Lombardo Toledano, which stopped being welcomed in the PRI after its conservative spin during Miguel Aleman's administration (1946-1952). Regarding the PARM, this party gave a space of political participation to actual revolutionary veterans whose attachment to the ideals of the revolution stopped matching the PRI's "progressive" goals.

The case of the PST is a bit different because it did not emerge from the marginalization of a particular group from the PRI. The objective of this party was not to provide a space of political participation to marginalized factions but to attract the progressive left that was out of the PRI's control. Despite the differences between those satellite parties and the PRI, they all shared, in theory, the same principles, which made the collaboration possible. However, the abandonment of the PRI's ideals

[19] In the argot of Mexican politics the *destape* refers to the public announcement of the PRI's presidential candidate. Probably, its most accurate translation would be the unveiling, because it was a significant ritual in the process of power transmission from one president to another, in which the party publicly endorsed the future president.
[20] *Uno más uno*, October 8, 1987.

during the administration of Miguel de la Madrid pushed them apart to the point that their association was no longer possible.

The *Frente Democrático Naciónal* (National Democratic Front, FDN) was the organization that supported the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. It was integrated by the PPS, PARM, and the PST –which became the Cardenista Front for National Reconstruction Party in 1987. In addition to the political parties, other organizations like the *Coalición de Trabajadores, Campesinos y Estudiantes del Itsmo* (Coalition of Workers, Peasants, and Students of the Isthmus, COCEI), the *Central Independiente de Trabajadores Agrícolas y Campesinos* (Independent Central of Agricultural Workers and Peasant, CIOAC), the *Asamblea de Barrios de la Ciudad de México* (Assembly of Barrios of Mexico City, AB) or the *Unión de Coloias Populares* (Union of Colonies Populares, UCP) also joined the FDN (Tavera, 2013: 126).

Despite having the support of three parties and diverse social organizations, the administration of Miguel de la Madrid underestimated the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. However, in the course of the presidential race de la Madrid acknowledged that

> The candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas has gained greater force than we originally anticipated. Even today, it is in question who will get the most votes, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas or Heberto Castillo (De la Madrid, 806).

De la Madrid attributed Cárdenas' success to his father's legacy and the discontent of some sectors of the PRI. However, he was quite surprised that it was until the end of his penultimate year when a frontal opposition to his policies emerged, and not at the beginning of his presidential term (De la Madrid, 809).

Even though the factors mentioned by de la Madrid might have had some influence on the campaign's success, I consider that it was more the result of the mobilizing capacity of the FDN's discourse and the cohesion around Cárdenas' leadership. Probably, their manifesto is the document in which the FDN's discourse is more clearly expressed. In that document, the FDN denounced the abandonment of the constitutional project and the increasing foreign dependency. According to them, those diversions from the revolutionary principles, which occurred during de la Madrid's administration, had impoverished the people and were against the social and individual constitutional rights. The main person responsible for that calamity was Carlos Salinas de Gortari, chosen by the president to be his successor and the "[…]

primary author of the disastrous economic policy that deeply hurt society majority groups and undermined the foundations of national sovereignty".[21]

The mobilizing capacity of the FDN discourse was based, in the first place, on the fact that it identified and framed a problem that resonated among the population: the impoverishment and diminished constitutional rights. In the second place, it established the cause of the problem and who was responsible: the abandonment of the revolutionary project by the implementation of an economic policy conceived by Carlos Salinas. Finally, it provided a solution to the problem: the creation of a front "that would become a fence against the reactionary sectors and the threats from abroad, and that would be capable of changing the balance of force".[22]

The success of the Cárdenas campaign also took by surprise the left-wing parties, which were in the process of consolidating their unification. This new factor in the political scene put the party from the left that resulted from the unification in a crossroads, in which it had to choose between continuing as a weak political force or join the FDN. I will explain the resolution to that dilemma in the next section but, first, it is essential to address the process of creation of the new organization because it will enable us to understand the reasons behind its decision and the consequences for the political system.

The third wheel in the Party System

In parallel to the fragmentation of the PRI, some left-wing organizations began (another) process of unification. The *Partido Socialista Unificado de México* (Mexican Socialist Unified Party, PSUM), the *Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores* (Mexican Worker's Party, PMT), the *Partido Patriótico Revolucionario* (Patriotic Revolutionary Party, PPR)[23], the *Movimiento Revolucionario del Pueblo* (Revolutionary Movement of the People, MRP)[24], the *Unidad de Izquierda Comunista* (Left-Wing Communist

[21] "Plataforma Común del Frente Democrático Nacional", p.116.
[22] "Plataforma Común del Frente Democrático Nacional", p.117.
[23] The PPR was created in 1985 from some sectors of the September 23rd Communist League, one of the most relevant insurgent movements in the 1970s, and radicalized students. Their ideology was a "confusing mix of Marxist orthodox, prosovietism, anti-imperialims, and proposals of wide alliances with some sector of the bourgeoisie and union bureaucracy" to conduct an anti-oligarchy and anti-imperialist revolution (Modonesi, 2003: 51).
[24] The origins of the MPR were splits from the PCM and ex-guerrilla fighters. The organization was born in 1981, and was integrated by students and people from the popular urban movements. Its ideology covered a wide range of tendencies, which went from revolutionary Christianity, Marxisim-Leninism, Maoism and nationalism (Modonesi, 2003: 51).

Unity, UIC)[25] and a split from the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (Socialist Workers Party, PST) all participated in the creation of the *Partido Mexicano Socialista* (Mexican Socialist Party, PMS).

The organizations announced the beginning of the process of unification in early March 1987. At first glance, it might appear that the PMS had finally accomplished the impossible by bringing the PMT and PSUM together, along with multiple splits from the PCM, in a single organization. It is worth remembering that the PMT had the intention of joining the unitary effort of the PSUM, but they pulled out at the last moment, and got its registration as a national political party.

Seen from the perspective of time, it is understandable that bringing together that variety of organizations was difficult. The ideological diversity of the organizations made a long-term collaboration challenging to sustain. Notably, the PMT came from a left-wing nationalist tradition that found its origins in the Mexican Revolution, which contrasted with the socialist/communist tradition of most of the other organizations.

Until the 1960s, the collaboration of those two tendencies was possible due to some ideological convergence, like their anti-imperialism stance. However, the transformations in the international socialist/communist tradition during the 1960s and 1970s led to a distancing of their positions. In the 1970s, the Mexican socialist and communist groups stopped seeking an alliance with the national bourgeoisie and started pursuing the implementation of socialism through the electoral way. The political reform during the administration of López Portillo facilitated this change by enabling their electoral participation. From that point onwards, the ultimate goal of the socialist parties in Mexico was to achieve socialism through democracy. In contrast, the PMT and its leader, Heberto Castillo, pursued the defence of national sovereignty and the principles of the Mexican Revolution.

Despite the differences between the left-wing parties, they decided to join forces to overcome their electoral failure, which became evident after the 1985 midterm elections. In that electoral process, neither of the parties got more than 3.23% of the votes. These results, in comparison with 15.54% obtained by the PAN, definitely came short and contrasted with the expectations created after the emergence of the PSUM and the PMT's registration.

[25] The UIC split from the PCM in 1979, and his main leader was Manuel Terrazas, who held an orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideology (Modonesi, 2003: 51).

Relative Majority Deputies (1985)

PAN	PRI	PPS	PARM	PDM	PSUM	PST	PRT	PMT
15.54%	64.90%	1.97%	1.66%	2.72%	3.23%	2.47%	1.27%	1.55%

Source: Silvia Gómez Tagle (1990) *Las Estadisticas Electorales de la Refoma Politica*, Mexico, El Colegio de Mexico, p.195

Their lack of electoral success can be attributed to the "[…] exhaustion of the political projects represented […] by the left parties",[26] which, according to Massimo Modonessi, in the case of PSUM was the result of:

> "[…] the ebb of mobilization, the scant presence of socialists in the ongoing social struggles, the lack of combativeness, reflection and investigation; the uneven regional distribution, the presence of groups within the party that made organic life difficult, the decision-making by few leaders, and the split in 1985, which had damaged the image and life of the party" (Modonesi, 2003: 48).

This analysis refers particularly to the PSUM. However, it could also explain the incapacity of the other left-wing parties to become the mass movement they aspired to be. Instead of focusing on solving those problems, the left-wing parties considered that the solution was in their unification.

The process of unification took several months and happened in several stages. First, each organization discussed with its members the draft of the future party's platform in order to get their approval. Second, the parties celebrated a unification congress and applied for the party's registration. Finally, the party selected its presidential candidate through primary elections. During the process, the constituents of the new party agreed on fundamental things like the party's name and structure.

Regarding the name, they declared that it represented "the two clearest ideological strands within the new party: the nationalist, democratic and popular, and the socialist and communist".[27] Concerning the leadership of the party, its members consent that it was going to be collective. The objective of that decision was to ensure the representation of each member organization in its commanding[28]. Also, they agreed that the unity was going to be organic, but not programmatic.

[26] Eduardo Cervantes Díaz, "Convergencia de la Diversidad", *Uno más Uno*, March 27, 1987.
[27] Raúl Correa, "La nueva organización de Izquierda se llamará Partido Mexicano Socialista", Uno más uno,
[28] *Uno más uno*, 29 03 87.

The process of unification concluded in September 1987, when the PMS presented its candidate and electoral platform. The chosen one to represent the party in the 1988 electoral process was Heberto Castillo, former leader of the PMT, and the three main objectives of the campaign were: social and economic development, democracy, and sovereignty.[29]

In appearance, the process of formation of the PMT was democratic and inclusive. However, a closer look might reveal that the final structure and its program were the result of the member organizations' incapacity to develop a robust and organic unity. The fact that the leadership was collective and the unity organic revealed a lack of consensus. This party structure allowed each organization to keep their ideological positions without having to integrate and permitted their respective leaders to preserve control over their groups.

In addition, the candidate selected and the platform for the 1988 elections shows that little by little, the nationalist tendency of the party imposed over the socialist. In the campaign objectives and the points of the platform the goal of implementing socialism in Mexico is barely mentioned. However, they do stress the importance of recovering national sovereignty and mention the small and medium businessman under the threat of big capital as one of the groups that the party aims to attract.[30]

The feeble unity of the PMS was exposed when the possibility of building an alliance with Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas became an option. This unexpected situation destabilized the PMS and led to internal conflicts because there was a faction of the party that considered that supporting Cárdenas' candidacy would increase their chances to win more votes. In contrast, there was another that insisted on continuing with Heberto Castillo as their candidate. In the end, a month before the election, Castillo agreed to step down, and the PMS join the National Democratic Front coalition to back Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

According to Heberto Castillo, the PMS decided to support the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas because they had "[…] the political sensibility to perceive the generalized workers' demand that [asked] them to unite forces [with the FDN] to open

[29] "Intervención para presentar la plataforma electoral ante la prensa", Archivo Histórico PRD, Document number 172292.
[30] Intervención para presentar la plataforma electoral ante la prensa", Archivo Histórico PRD, Document number 172292.

the path to a new life for the nation".[31] Besides those noble intentions, the PMS also decided to join because refusing to do so would have implied their political marginalization. The organization headed by Cárdenas was becoming the left-wing party alternative, that neither the PSUM nor the PMS were capable of being. Therefore, if the groups that formed the PMS wanted to stay active in the political scene, they did not have another option. After the PMS integration to the FDN, this organization practically represented the diverse factions of the Mexican left, except for the radical wing of the partisan left embodied by the PRT, who decided not to merge.

The PMS and the FDN agreed on the terms of unification before its formalization. Broadly speaking, their leadership decided that each part was keeping its structure and program. However, their programs shared some points in common. To begin with, they wanted to eliminate the presidential and corporatist systems, and the implantation of a party regime. Also, they aimed for a mixed economy that sought the fair distribution of wealth and to fight for a new world economic order. Finally, they were in favour of the suspension of the debt payment.[32]

The integration between the PMS and the FDN was not easy. The diversity of organizations, and the political traditions that characterized each, created frictions during and after the electoral campaign. Despite the internal conflicts of the FDN, the success of Cárdenas' campaign translated in good numbers in the polls, where the FDN, according to the official results, came second with 5,911,133 votes, which was equivalent to 30% of the votes. The official winner of the election was Carlos Salinas de Gortari, with 50.36% of the votes. It is relevant to mention that a strong suspicion of fraud surrounded the victory of Salinas, and it is also suspected that the real winner of those elections was Cárdenas. Regarding the PAN, they came in third place with 17.07% of the votes (Gómez-Tagle, 1990: 231).

Once that process concluded, the FDN had the challenge of "consolidating as a new political and electoral option and defining an organizational integration model that would provide continuance" (Campuzano, 2002: 225). The majority of the FDN members accepted the challenge and founded the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) in May 1989.

[31] *Uno más uno*, June 4, 1988.
[32] *Uno más uno*, June 4, 1987.

Given the successful presidential campaign and the great electoral results, the PRD came into the political scene in a privileged position with the potential of becoming a counterweight to the PRI. However, this new organization dragged along some of the problems of its predecessors, like the lack of internal cohesion. Those problems became an obstacle to turn the possibility into reality. Nonetheless, the appearance of the PRD contributed to the transformation of the hegemonic party system into a multiparty system by creating a viable left-wing alternative.

Chapter Conclusion

The administration of Miguel de la Madrid, consolidated the statist and anti-statist positions that have articulated the Mexican political space ever since. This transformation led to the end of the hegemonic party system because it eroded the foundations that supported it. First of all, it meant the conclusion of the revolution's historical project and the commitment of the hegemonic party with it. Also, it signified the rearrangement of the political space, which placed the PRI in the centre-right of the spectrum. This transformation was crucial because the PRI could no longer claim that it represented the nation's interests –although it insisted it did. Also, the consolidation of those positions enabled the emergence of opposed political and economic projects, which was translated into electoral competition.

Further, during this administration, the opposition political parties developed as entities capable of competing against the PRI. In the case of the PAN, this meant that the party became capable of winning elections and defending its triumphs. The PAN was able to accomplish that through the combination of the articulation of civil discontent, the use of innovative political tactics, and the leadership and resources brought by the business sector to the PAN

In the case of the left-wing, two factors contributed to its development. In the first place, the unification of the various political parties in the PMS. Secondly, the PRI's abandonment of its revolutionary principles, and the emergence of internal opposition. This internal opposition was against that cessation, but also against the presidential figure. The separation of the CD and the creation of the FDN meant the emergence of a viable left-wing alternative in the system. The contribution of the PMS to that coalition was not in terms of electoral strength. What the PMS brought to the FDN was a structure that allowed it to transition into the PRD after the elections. The

CD was not the first divorce in the history of the PRI. But it was the first to ally with an organization that already had a party structure, even if it was a feeble one.

Conclusion

The Research Journey

When I applied for the Ph.D., I aimed to analyze the labour movement's role in Mexico's democratization process using Charles Tilly's democratization theory. According to Tilly, democracy is a relationship between a state and its citizens characterized by a mutually bonding, equal, and protected consultation. This relation can vary over time changes can leading to either a more (democratization process) or less (de-democratization process) democratic relationship between state and citizens (Tilly, 2007: 14). In concrete terms, my research focused on the *Frente Nacional de Acción Popular* (National Front of Popular Action, FNAP), which emerged in 1976 intending to unify in a single organization groups from the peasant, labour, and other urban popular movements. I hypothesized that the FNAP contributed to Mexico's democratization by challenging the corporatist structure, which was one of the pillars of the authoritarian Mexican regime because it prevented the emergence of opposition movements capable of challenging its power.

However, after analyzing the context in which the FNAP emerged, I realized that I was attributing to it a transformative capacity that did not correspond to the organization's reality. The main thing that drove me to think this was that, during the administration of Luis Echeverría, the labor and peasant's mobilizations were, at some point, encouraged by the government. Having an awareness of that fact made me question its popular roots and its force to truly transform the relationship between the Mexican state and its citizens. This impression was reinforced because the FNAP was dismantled after the SUTERM[1], the electrician's trade union, was defeated. The SUTERM was an organization that starred in the worker's offensive during Echeverría's government.

Additionally, after this finding, I started to distance my research from the literature about Mexico's democratization process because I deemed that it did not provide the theoretical support to explain the process of political change I was observing. At that point, I was not entirely sure what process I was observing, but I knew that literature would not help find an answer. In general terms, this literature tends to focus on the electoral reforms and how they opened up the political system

[1] SUTERM stands for Sindicato Único de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana [Single Trade Union of Electrician Wokers from the Mexican Republic].

for the opposition, particularly the left-wing opposition, and in the electoral processes (Becerra *et al.*, 2000; Molinar, 1991; Cadena-Roa & López, 2011, Labastida *et al.*, 2004; Woldenberg, 2006).

Although I felt a bit disappointed in not being able to establish a correlation between the worker's movement and Mexico's process of democratization, I also felt intrigued by the encouragement given by Luis Echeverría to the popular mobilizations during his administration. This curiosity drove me to find out more about why Echeverría had done that. I found out that he was trying to build a base of social support that would enable him to implement the economic and political reforms through which he pretended to restore the legitimacy of the Mexican state. Echeverría's strategy required weakening the corporatist leaders' power because their control over the workers and peasants allowed them to become an independent political force, which was inconvenient when their objectives did not match the President's aims. However, Echeverría had to drop his quest against the corporatist leaders, particularly against Fidel Velazquez, because he needed them in his confrontation with the business sector, a conflict that originated when he implemented a new economic model. In the beginning, I tried to address this as a problem of state capacity (Centeno, 2002), and I argued that the alliance between the corporatist structure of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the administrations of Luis Echeverría and López Portillo weakened the state's capacity because it blocked the possibility of building a base of social support for the implementation of their policies.

One of the comments I received in my first-year review was that I was establishing a counterfactual argument. That comment made me rethink the research problem I was trying to solve, which finally led me to analyze the party system. At first, I was addressing this problem as a legitimacy problem. Based on the concept of performance legitimacy (Zhao, 2009), I was suggesting that, until the 1970s, the Mexican state's legitimacy was based on its condition as the heir of the Mexican revolution and its competence and economic success. Also, I argued that the economic and political crisis that emerged in the administration of Luis Echeverría eroded those foundations of legitimacy, paving the way for legitimacy based on electoral democracy. Likewise, I stated that change enabled the transformation from a hegemonic party system to a multi-party system. Up to this point, the theoretical framework guiding my research was Sartori's ([1976] 2005) theory about the party systems.

However, my supervisors observed that my argument did not provide a sociological explanation about the party system's changes and advised me to read Cedric de Leon's (2014 & 2015) work. Also, they encouraged me to reflect on the structural differences that the political parties were articulating. Both recommendations were essential for bringing my research to the point in which it is now. Although I am not the first to suggest that the division that has articulated the Mexican political space since the 1980s onwards is the statist/anti-statist division (Crespo 1991, Loaeza, 2008), I had to find it out by myself through the revision of the law initiatives discussed in the Chamber of Deputies between 1979 to 1988.

I started checking the transcriptions of the debates in 1979 because that was the year of the first elections after the 1977 electoral reform, which allowed the incorporation of new opposition parties into the Chamber of Deputies. That revision required a month of work, but it was crucial for me to understand that what was at stake was the state's involvement in the economy. Also, it allowed me to comprehend the interactions between the political parties, which was particularly useful for understanding how the activity of the left-wing parties in the Chamber of Deputies forged their alliance.

Another essential recommendation from my supervisors was the work of Víctor Pérez Díaz, which helped me to comprehend and explain how and why a change in the economic model led to the transformation of the relationship between civil society and the state. It also helped me understand how a change in that relationship could open the door to political pluralism.

The thesis in a nutshell

This research journey finally led me to establish a connection between the party system, the economic model, and the relationship between the state and civil society. My argument became that the transformation of the hegemonic party system to a multi-party system was possible due to the rupture of the political cohesion that mediated the relations between the state and civil society and the development of the opposition parties as entities capable of contesting the hegemonic party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). I argued that the breaking of that cohesion resulted from the disagreement around the state's intervention in the economy and the opposition to the PRI government's authoritarian practices. Also, I argued that the development of the opposition parties' political strength was correlated to that breaking

of cohesion, but it also resulted from the electoral reforms and their ability to organize and mobilize disaffected citizens.

Following G. Sartori, I define the party system as a "[…] system of interactions resulting from interparty competition" (Sartori, 2005 39), and a hegemonic party system as a system in which one party counts more than the others, meaning that in those systems there are multiple parties, but only one governs because the opposition parties do not compete in antagonistic and equal terms with the hegemonic party (Sartori, 2005 112). Additionally, I argue that the hegemonic party system and the ruling of the hegemonic party are legitimized by a historical project which also provided political cohesion to the country.

According to T.J. Pempel, a historical project is a "[…] series of interrelated and mutually supportive policies that give shape to the national political agenda" (Pempel, 1991: 4). In the Mexican case, the historical project was determined by the country's modernization. Besides shaping the national political agenda, it also defined the relationship between the state and diverse civil society groups. In this arrangement, the business sector's role was to carry out the country's economic development, whereas the state's role was to create and maintain the conditions for that development to happen.

Between the early 1950s and the late 1960s, the Mexican state did its part based on an economic model known as Stabilizing Development and followed an import substitution strategy to promote the country's industrialization. However, in the early 1970s, the economic model began to show signs of exhaustion. To tackle that problem, the administration of Luis Echeverría tried to implement a new economic model, which modified the terms of the relationship between the state and the business sector by increasing the role of the state in the economy. The attempt to modify the economic model faced the opposition of the business sector, which considered that an increase of the state's presence in the economy would only aggravate the crisis, which they considered was the result of the government's economic mismanagement.

At the core of that conflict was the transition from a regulated to a market economy, which, like any other major social transformations, promoted the emergence of society's heterogeneity. As I explained in the first chapter, this diversity brings with it "new demands, sectors, and identities […]" (De Leon et al., 2015: 30) that enable the creation of new social cleavages. In this particular case, the cleavage that emerged

was between the statist and the anti-statist factions. The main characteristic of the statist faction was that it favored the state's regulation of the economy. In contrast, the main feature of the anti-statist faction was that it opposed that intervention and advocated for the liberalization and internationalization of the markets.

The political parties articulated that cleavage by politicizing those divisions "[...] to build powerful blocs of supporters in whose name they attempt[ed] to remake […]" (De Leon *et al.*, 2015: 2) the Mexican state and its society. The PAN and the PRI articulated the anti-statist faction, which might seem ironic given that for years the PAN was the only party in the system that had significant political differences with the PRI. However, as I explained in the first chapter, their opposition to the state's intervention in the economy had different origins. The anti-statism of the PAN was a conservative stance that opposed the state's general intervention, whereas the PRI's anti-statism was linked to a liberal position that advocated for the liberalization of the economy from the control of the state.

The PAN's conservative anti-statism was rooted in its anti-authoritarian stance, by which they rejected the state's intervention in regulating different aspects of the citizen's lives, not only the economy; examples of this are their opposition to a state regulated education or their antiabortion position. The combination of its anti-authoritarian discourse with its opposition to state intervention in the economy enabled the mobilization of middle-class members and a faction of the business sector. The PAN's capacity to articulate this faction strengthened after the nationalization of the bank system in 1982, an event that the PAN, and some national businessmen, interpreted as an abuse of the presidential power. López Portillo announced the nationalization during his last address to the nation in September of 1982, and this decision took both the business sector and members of the government by surprise because the President had only informed his close collaborators. That it is to say, it was a decision that López Portillo took without consulting practically anyone, creating discontent among the business sector and within the political elite.

It is relevant to mention that the PAN had to develop as an opposition party to articulate the conservative anti-statist cleavage and to mobilize its supporters to challenge the PRI in the polls. Its development was correlated to the diverse electoral reforms that opened the political system and its internal changes, allowing it to welcome the disaffected businessmen and give voice to the civil opposition against the PRI.

A group of technocrats articulated the PRI's liberal anti-statism. As I explained before, this group began to rise in the early 1970s within the ranks of the public administration, and consolidated with the arrival of Miguel de la Madrid to the presidency, when they took control of the government and the PRI. The liberal anti-statism of the PRI developed around the idea of efficiency. For the technocrats, a robust state in economic terms was inefficient. According to them, the best proof of that was the administrations of Luis Echeverría and José López Portillo, when the expansion of the economic activities of the state had aggravated the economic crisis of the country. Another characteristic of the PRI's anti-statism was the defense of the political system's practices and institutions. Notably, the presidential power to designate his successor.

That unwritten power became a controversial subject when the moment to select De la Madrid's successor came. During that administration, there was a shift within the government and the PRI towards a neoliberal path, which created discontent among some *priistas*. The disaffected *priistas* that opposed the neoliberal spin tried to stop Miguel de la Madrid from selecting his successor because they knew that he would choose someone that would continue his policy. This opposition was led by Porfirio Munoz Ledo and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who advocated for the revindication of the principles of the Mexican revolution, and came together in the *Corriente Democrática* (Democratic Current, CD).

The main aim of the CD was to democratize the selection of the PRI's presidential candidate. They argued that the party's rank and file opposed the policy of De la Madrid's administration, and that, if the selection process were democratic, the party members would choose someone that would restore the principles of the Mexican Revolution. The CD's efforts were unsuccessful, and De la Madrid selected Carlos Salinas de Gortari as the next presidential candidate, who, as expected, continued and deepened the neoliberal policies of his predecessor. After the nomination of Salinas, many members of the CD left the party and supported the candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

The candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was essential for the articulation of the statist cleavage because it enabled the unification of the left-wing parties in a single organization that eventually became the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD). The former *priístas* and the left-wing parties, particularly the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS), shared their opposition to the

advancement of neoliberalism and defended a strong role of the state in the economy. It is relevant to mention that the unification of the left-wing parties was a process that began after the 1977 electoral reform, when the parties that had been excluded from the political system had the opportunity to contend in the elections.

The first unifying attempt of the left took place in 1979 with the Left Wing Coalition, a parliamentary group integrated by the Mexican Communist Party and other left-wing organizations. This first experience was crucial because it showed the possibility of collaboration despite their differences and paved the way for the *Partido Socialista Unificado de México* (Mexican Socialist Unified Party, PSUM). The PSUM was a more institutionalized attempt to integrate the left-wing parties. However, it did not unify all the registered left-wing parties, like the PMT and PRT. During the legislative period of 1982 to 1985, once again, the collaboration in the Chamber of Deputies made possible a second unifying attempt with the creation of the *Partido Mexicano Socialista* (Mexican Socialist Party, PMS). This party unified the PMT and the PSUM to contend in the 1988 elections. They nominated Heberto Castillo as their presidential candidate, but he stepped down in favor of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas when the PMS joined the FDN.

The left-wing parties' organizational efforts were crucial for the formation of the PRD in the late 1980s because they created the mechanisms that enabled the management of the differences between the left-wing parties to work in unity. These mechanisms were necessary because the unification of the left was not organic, but pragmatic, which permitted them to contend together in the elections, but resulted in a fragile organization, menaced continuously by its division.

The emergence of a left-wing party with the capacity to challenge the PRI, and compete against the PAN, was decisive for transforming the hegemonic party system into a multi-party system. If it had not been for that, the party system would probably have transformed into a two-party system with the PAN and the PRI contending in the polls. That tendency can be inferred from the electoral numbers, which show a steady growth of the PAN.

It is also probable that the alternation of power between parties would have taken longer than it did. The case of Chihuahua showed that, even if the *panistas* had the muscle to defy the PRI, the government was not ready to accept the PRI's defeat and leave a political charge, like a governorship, in the hand of the opposition.

However, what emerged was a left-wing alternative with the capacity to contest not only the PRI's authoritarianism but also its neoliberal policy.

Neoliberalism, democracy and citizenship

After the 1988 elections, it became evident that the government and PRI could not continue holding the PRI's hegemony and had to start acknowledging the opposition's triumphs. Additionally, the PRI and the Salinas administration realized that the opposition to its neoliberal agenda was strong, and they turned to the PAN for support. As I explained before, both parties' political positions were not diametrically different, and they shared a common ground that would enable the implementation of the neoliberal agenda: their opposition to the state's intervention in the economy.

The PRI had to give the PAN something in exchange: acknowledging their electoral victories, which allowed the PAN to continue growing as a political force. From this point of view, the Mexican democratization process seems less like the result of the people's demands and more a political negotiation that paved the way for implementing a neoliberal agenda. This perception undermines the research project with which I initiated my Ph.D. and raises questions about the quality of Mexico's democracy. By saying this, I do not want to imply that the Mexican people did not want a more democratic government because it is not true. Evidence of that is the support that the PAN got from members of the middle classes, without which it would not have grown as an opposition party capable of contesting the PRI in the polls.

Some Latin American scholars have already pointed out the correlation between Latin America's democratization processes and neoliberalism, like Dario Salinas (1992 & 2003), Evelina Dagnino *et al.* (2006), or Sergio Tamayo (1999 & 2006). In the Mexican case, Tamayo argues that from 1968 it began a transformation of the conception and practice of citizenship, which went from populist to neoliberal (Tamayo, 1999: 32). According to him, neoliberalism vindicated democracy, emphasizing individual liberties, which created an individual concept of citizenship, undermining social citizenship and the collective rights associated with it (Tamayo, 2006).

The weakening of social citizenship was a phenomenon linked to the implementation of neoliberalism across the world, which in the Western democracies meant the rolling back of labor rights and welfare states (Mann, 2012: 30). In the Latin

American case, this rolling back has been interpreted by some scholars, like Michael Mann, as a virtue of neoliberalism, because it permitted the dismantling of the patron-client networks that supported those systems, something that he considers "[…] may have cleared the way for the later development of more universal programs" (Mann, 2012: 16). Although that was a possibility, I believe that a closer look at the region and its social and political development from the early 1990s onwards would reveal otherwise.

For Mexico, the process of dismantling the corporatist patron-client networks and its substitution by new patron-client networks that were supported in the distribution of resources through social programs is a phenomenon that has to be further studied. However, the research about the social programs implemented by the neoliberal governments, particularly from Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) onwards, has shown that they served, among other things, to create patron-client networks of supporters for the political parties. The erosion of the patron-client networks that supported the corporatist structure opened the door for the opposition parties to create their own patron-client networks based on the social programs, which are not democratic relations between the political parties and society. Despite Michael Mann's take on neoliberalism and democracy in Latin America, it seems that correlation is not a positive one. Although the advance of neoliberalism indeed eroded authoritarian enclaves, this was not necessarily translated in the construction of democratic relations between state and society.

Additionally, I think my research opens the door to questioning the correlation between pluralism and democracy. A plurality of voices can only lead to better democratic institutions if the projects that plurality represents are rooted in society. The political parties have a crucial role in enabling that connection. If they cannot build a strong base of social support, the projects they represent are empty because they are not responding to society's needs and expectations. Also, if the political parties lack that social base of support, the democratic game turns into a dynamic of competition and negotiation between the political elites for the spaces of power, in which society seems to be neglected.

Beyond Mexico

Mexico was not the only country in which profound social and economic changes led to political transformations. The correlation between neoliberal economic restructuration and the opening of the political system can be found in other countries like Chile, Brazil, and Taiwan. Probably, the idea of comparing Mexico's democratization with those countries might seem odd. However, if we focus our attention on the structural and contextual factors framing each democratic processes, it is not difficult to find similarities.

For example, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a common feature between those three countries was that their regimes were undergoing a legitimacy crisis linked to the regime's authoritarian practices and, in the cases of Mexico, Chile and Brazil, to a halt of economic growth. In all cases, the elites in power tried to tackle that situation through mild political reforms to integrate the opposition into the system, and, in Mexico, Taiwan and Brazil, by restructuring the country's economic model.

Also, the popular antiauthoritarian grievances and the economic elite's disagreement towards the state's economic interventionism met in the pro-democratic movements. However, for different reasons, the popular organizations were incapable of leading the pro-democratic movements. In consequence, in all cases, the political parties were crucial in bringing together the popular and business sectors in their pro-democratic struggle. Additionally, they were instrumental in the implementation of the legislation that permitted the opening of the political systems, because they facilitated the negotiations between the ruling elite and the pro-democratic forces. In general terms, those agreements favoured the interest of the business sector and protected the ruling elite; but neglected the demands of equality and accountability placed by the popular sectors. Finally, in all cases, the democratization process enabled the implementation and/or deepening of neoliberalism.

Chile

In the Chilean case, the military dictatorship implemented a neoliberal economic model and, since the beginning, there were protests against both. But, it was until the early 1980s, "[…] when the economy was entering a severe […] crisis" (Solimano, 2012: 26), that those complaints intensified, leading to a protest cycle (1983-1986) that revived the Chilean civil society (Garreton, 2001: 304-305). As a consequence of those protests, the government modified certain aspects of its *laissez*

fair economic model and granted some political concessions, like allowing the return of political exiles and the circulation of publications from the opposition (Garreton, 2001: 303).

The opposition was demobilized in 1986 when the dictatorship imposed a state of siege after finding the arsenal of the *Frente Patriotico Manuel Rodriguez* and Pinochet's attempt of murder (Garreton, 2001: 308). The retraction of the opposition reinforced the idea that the dictatorship was invincible. However, the plebiscite of 1988[2] gave them the chance to reappear in the public space. In contrast with the protests of 1983-1986, the political parties took the lead of the opposition movement and prioritized defeating Pinochet over other sectorial demands. The opposition parties achieved their objective by joining forces in the *Concentracion de Partidos por el NO* (Coalition of Parties for the NO) and running a successful campaign.

From that perspective, the Chilean case seems like a triumph for the opposition and the mobilized civil society. Nevertheless, this victory resulted not only from the pressure exercised by the popular discontent. It also was a consequence of the negotiations between the opposition parties, particularly the Christian Democratic Party, and members of the dictatorship. Those agreements aimed to create the institutional conditions to protect the regime designed by the dictatorship in the 1980 constitution and integrate the opposition into it. In political terms, that protection prevented accountability for the crimes of Pinochet's government, and in economic terms, it allowed the preservation and deepening of the market economy (Gomez-Leyton, 2011: 64-69).

Brazil

Like in other authoritarian regimes, economic growth was a crucial aspect for the military dictatorship in Brazil. Therefore, when the economy stopped growing in the early 1970s, "[…] social discipline began to crumble", and the opposition to the military regime began to articulate (Saad-Filho & Morais, 2019)[3]. That opposition emerged

[2] The aim of the plebiscite was to decide if Pinochet and the military Junta should remain in power after the end of their mandate in 1990, or if a new president and congress should be elected.

[3] In general terms, after 1967, the Brazilian economic model was characterized by massive state spending and the rapid expansion of the public sector, being the business sector its primary beneficiary (Kingston, 1994: 30). Between 1967 to 1974, this model brought growth to the Brazilian economy. However, the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 hit it hard, and "the military could not impose painful" adjustment measures for its recovery as they previously did (Kingston, 1994: 31). On this occasion, the adverse global economic context, together with Brazil's international debt, hindered the dictatorship's access to international resources to finance its economic model.

from two different sources: the business sector, which opposed the state's economic intervention, and the middle and popular sectors, which manifested against the regime's systemic repression and inequality.

In the Brazilian case, the political parties[4] played a crucial role in the democratization process because the independent popular mobilization against the military dictatorship was not strong enough due to the corporatist control over the working classes. During the two-party system period, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB) articulated the pro-democratic multiclass alliance that opposed the dictatorship, which successfully pushed for reforms that enabled the strengthening of the opposition and the gradual opening of the regime. Once the MDB disintegrated due to the electoral reforms of 1981, the multi-class alliance weakened, but the pro-democratic movement advanced. As the economic situation worsened, the confidence in the military rule deteriorated, and the belief that democracy was the way out of the crisis grew stronger.

According to Saad-Filho and Morais (2019), the Brazilian elites considered democracy the best alternative to preserve their hegemony and stop the strengthening of the left-wing forces, which they viewed as a menace to the status *quo*. In the context of the presidential elections of 1985, the PMDB candidate, Tancredo Neves, allied with members of the ruling class and convinced the military to step down from power by assuring them that there would not be any radical changes (Mainwaring, 1999: 97). Neves became the first civilian elected as president since 1964, and with this began Brazil's transition to democracy, which, according to Saad-Filho and Morais (2019), allowed the elite to keep their hegemony and advance the neoliberal restructuring of the economy.

Taiwan

Outside the Latin American context, Taiwan is an example that illustrates the argument of this thesis. Like Mexico, Taiwan was ruled by a single party, the Kuomintang (KMT), for many decades (1949-2000). Although, in contrast with Mexico, between 1949 and 1987, Taiwan had a martial law that did not allow any other party but the KMT (Green,

[4] Between 1964 and 1979, the military dictatorship only allowed two parties: the pro-government ARENA and MDB, the catchall oppositionist party (Mainwaring, 1999: 86). After the electoral reforms of 1981, the two-party system was transformed into a multiparty system, in which the three main parties were the PDS, previously ARENA; the PMDB, a predominantly social-democrat party that also included clandestine leftist organizations and conservatives; and the Popular Party (PP), integrated by the conservatives from the MDB and the liberals from ARENA (Mainwaring, 1999: 90-91).

2007). The law was lifted in July 1987 “to improve the country’s international image and promote democratic reform”.[5] This political reform allowed the legalization of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a political party created in 1986 that stood for the “self-determination for people considered to be ethnically Taiwanese, democratic freedoms […] and a multiparty system”.[6]

In addition to those political changes, during the mid-1980s, Taiwan underwent significant economic changes, as the state began to “shift from its embedded model to a neoliberal strategy which aimed to sustain growth through liberalization” (Tsai, 2001: 359). Although the economic restructuring was not a direct consequence of an economic crisis, like in the Latin American countries, it was partially motivated by a legitimacy crisis of the KMT ruling. For example, to “discard its image as a corrupt regime that preyed” on the public sector enterprises, the KMT accepted its privatization (Tsai, 2001: 372) and the public-private partnership (Hsu, 2006: 298). Regarding the opposition, the DPP also endorsed those neoliberal measures aiming to weaken the KMT by ending its distribution of favours (Tsai, 2001, 372).

In this case, further research on my behalf is needed to understand Taiwan’s democratic process better. However, the evidence above presented indicates a correlation between that process and the implementation of neoliberalism on the island. It seems that, as it happened in Mexico, Chile, and Brazil, the democratic process enabled the consolidation of neoliberalism in Taiwan.

[5] “End to Martial Law Proposed in Taiwan”, *Washington Post*, July 4, 1987.
[6] "Democratic Progressive Party". Encyclopedia Britannica, Invalid Date, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Democratic-Progressive-Party-political-party-Taiwan.

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